

**EXPERIENCES OF LESOTHO STUDENTS  
STUDYING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NATAL  
(DURBAN)**

**(EDGEWOOD CAMPUS)**

**THEIR PERCEPTIONS IN RELATION TO OPPRESSION IN THE  
FORM OF RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND SEXISM**

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Submitted as a dissertation component in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
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Declaration of originality

I hereby declare that the study "The experiences of Lesotho students studying at the University of Natal-Durban" is my own work and that all sources consulted and quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed



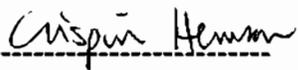
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M.E.PAE

Statement by the supervisor

This mini-dissertation is submitted with/ without my approval

Signed



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CRISPIN HEMSON

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the experiences of oppression Lesotho students studying at The University of Natal (Durban). The study explored the experiences in relation to oppression in relation to racism, xenophobia and sexism.

Interviews and observation were the research tools used in this study.

The results reveal that most of these students experience a vertical racism in the same way black South Africans experience it and they also experience xenophobia from black South African students.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Historical background of Lesotho students**

Lesotho is a small country covering an area of 30.355 square kilometres. It is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. According to the 1996 Lesotho population census, the population was estimated as approximately two million. (Graphic maps.com)

Lesotho is not a multiracial country like South Africa. About 99% of the population is Sotho, Most of the whites are priests, and most of the Indians are businessmen. About 99% of the population speak Sesotho (Southern-Sotho), however the official languages are Sesotho and English. (Graphic maps.com) this means that all Lesotho students studying at UND can speak both languages. There are few people who speak isiZulu and isiXhoza. More than 80% of Basotho are Christians, with Catholics, Evangelicals and Anglicans in the dominance, however some people are still engaged with traditional practices.

Basotho women are subordinates of men; even widows are to depend on their husband's brother or any male in-laws. Eldredge (2002) explains:

Laws and social customs were structured to ensure the legal, social, and economic dependence of women upon men, women were not allowed independent access to the primary means of support, land, nor did they have legal resource as their access to the courts was only through men. (P.126).

Nowadays some laws have been implemented, which protect women's rights, but women are still men's subordinates. Most leadership posts are still dominated by men. For example, there are only three female government ministries in Lesotho. Country Profile (2003). So therefore there is still a gender inequality or sexism in that country. Most people be it men or women still consider this practice as being normal. (Lesotho vision, 2020 & 2001).

Lesotho became a British protectorate in 1868 and gained its independence on the 4th-10-1966. (Sesotho.web.za). Even though the country is completely landlocked by South Africa, it was not directly affected by apartheid. Basotho people who experienced racism were those who worked in the South African mines and farms. Visitors to South Africa also experienced racism and other people just heard about it from relatives and friends residing in South Africa. (Cobber 1985)

Lesotho and South Africa have a long history of shared education. Before 1994 many black South African students studied outside their country in countries such as Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and some South Africans attended schools in Lesotho due to Bantu education, which was imposed on black people. Cobber (ibid.) argues that Lesotho had strong links between students of both countries, because at that time

South Africans who studied in Lesotho were exposed to expatriate teachers from Europe, America and other countries, who opposed oppression (racism).

After 1994 students from other countries began coming into South African schools, colleges, technikons and as well as universities. Lesotho students are no exception. There is only one university in Lesotho (The National University of Lesotho), meaning that it cannot accommodate all Basotho students, and there are some programmes, which are not offered in the university. According to the international students support office at the University of Natal Durban (UND), there are 394 registered Lesotho students at the University of Natal, this year (2003). There are 181-Durban campus, 170- Pietermaritzburg campus, 38- Edgewood campus and 5 at Medical school campus.

## **1.2. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Lesotho students studying at UND in relation to oppression. South Africa is a multiracial country in transition. During the apartheid era the government's policies, institutions and laws were based on the beliefs of group differences. People's lives were determined by race. People were separated according to their races. Stereotypes were used to categorise people hierarchically to their natural and physical distinctions. As a result boundaries of inclusion and exclusion were created, and the stereotypes determined group memberships and carried the power to declare what was normal and what was not.

Contemporary, post-apartheid South Africa is a society undergoing rapid change. It is of interest to know the extent to which the experiences of Lesotho students are close to those of black South African students or are determined more by being foreign. Do they experience racism because of being black just like black South Africans? And or do they experience xenophobia from other South Africans?

This study aims to raise awareness to Lesotho students as a group or individuals to be aware of their relationships with other racial groups of South Africa.

### **1.3. Statement of the problem**

In order to explore Lesotho students' experiences, it is important to answer the following questions:

- (a) Do Lesotho students experience racism?
- (b) Do Lesotho students experience xenophobia?
- (c) Do Lesotho students experience sexism and or
- (d) Do Lesotho students experience any other form of oppression?

#### 1.4. Concepts clarifications

In this study there are certain concepts used, which need clarification first:

- (a) **Education:** The total processes developing human ability and behaviour or the social process in which one achieves social competence and individual growth, carried on in a selected, controlled setting which can be institutionalised as a school or college. (Terry and Thomas (1978) and (Hornby 2000).
- (b) **University:** Institution of higher learning or education, usually with a high reputation in teaching and research. (Blake and Hanley 1995)
- (c) **Lecturer/tutor:** College or University teacher, or a teacher in a higher education, who oversees the student's academic progress. (Blake and Hanley 1995) and (Terry and Thomas 1978)
- (d) **Oppression:** A systematic discrimination, personal bias, and social prejudices against others in most aspects of life in our societies. (Adams 1997)
- (e) **Internalised domination:** When the members of the dominant or privileged group internalise the system of oppression. They enjoy the privileges and the cultural practices of their group as normal. (Adams 1997)

(f) **Internalised oppression:** When the members of the subordinate group accept negative images of themselves fostered by the dominant group. (Adams 1997 and 2000)

(g)

**Horizontal oppression (target- target):** When members of the oppressed group oppress each other or support the system of oppression directed against them (Adams 1997)

(h) **Racism:** A system of racial segregation, or discriminating against individuals on account of their race, or a system of advantaged based on race. (Adams 1997)

(i) **Xenophobia:** Hatred existing between races, because of being afraid of foreigners as a cultural threat to citizens. (Terry and Thomas 1978)

(j) **Sexism:** Unfair treatment of people especially women because of their sex or the cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and denigrate values and practices associated with women. (Adams 1997)

(k) **Targets (One- down):** Members of a social group exploited, discriminated and victimized in a variety of ways by the oppressor's system. (Adams 1997)

(l) **Agents (One-up):** Members of the dominant social group privileged by birth that knowingly or unknowingly exploit and reap unfair advantage over members of target groups. (Adams 1997)

(m) **People of colour:** All non-white people in the Southern African context this should include Indian, Coloureds and Blacks. (Adams 1997)

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAME WORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

I am using a Social Justice Education framework for this study. This focuses on specific social groups and on the power relations between them. According to Adams et al. (1997), social groups are groups of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the categories of social identity. A situation where one social group has greater power than another social group, and there is also prejudice against the other group, is seen as oppression.

Specifically, my research question focuses on racism and xenophobia. Within the social justice education framework, racism is understood in the ways which have been described below. Xenophobia is seen as a form of oppression.

I am thus interested in whether there are imbalances of power between white and black students (including those from Lesotho) and also processes of exclusion between black students and other black students. In this case I am interested to establish whether black students use their relative privilege in being South African to oppress students from other African countries.

Social Justice Education addresses issues of oppression and justice, in either the dominant or subordinated role. The concept of social justice refers to the:

Distribution of goods or services among a class, treating equals equally, legitimising social democracy or social welfare, or it is a concept of distributive justice to the wealth, assets, privileges and advantages that accumulate within a society or state. (Deem et al. in Gill 1992, p.209).

In this chapter I shall examine the concepts from literature on racism, sexism, xenophobia, in relation to the theories of oppression. According to Bell in Adams (1997):

Developing a social justice process in a society steeped in oppression is no simple feat. For this reason we need clear ways to define and analyse oppression so that we can understand how it operates at various individual, cultural, and institutional levels. (P.4)

In judging whether the experiences of Lesotho students is relevant to such context, it is necessary to clarify in some detail how these concepts are being used.

## **2.2. Oppression**

Young in Adams (2000) explains oppression as:

Vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a result of unconscious assumptions and reactions of well meaning people in ordinary interactions, media and cultural stereotypes.... Oppression refers to systematic constraints

on groups that are not necessarily the result of the intentions of a tyrant; oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies. (Pg: 36).

Hardiman in Adams (1997) states that oppression is a set of beliefs that asserts one group's superiority over another. It could be through violence, harassment, or discrimination toward members of target groups. Oppression exists when the following key elements are in place:

- The agent group has the power to define and name reality and determine what is "normal," "real," or "correct."
- Harassment, discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, and other forms of differential and unequal treatment are institutionalised and systematic.
- Psychological colonisation of the target group occurs through socializing the oppressed to internalise their oppressed condition and collude with the oppressor's ideology and social system.
- The target group's culture, language, and history are misrepresented, discounted, or eradicated and the dominant group's culture is imposed. (Hardiman and Jackson in Adams 1997, p.17)

The system of oppression can operate at individual, institutional or societal or cultural levels. Within these levels, targets may collude with their own oppression; Hardiman and Jackson in Adams (1997) name this *internalised subordination or oppression*. They say:

Through internalised subordination, members of target groups learn to collude with their own oppression or victimisation, when people have been socialised in an oppressive environment, and who accept the dominant group's ideology about their group, have learnt to accept a definition of themselves that is hurtful and limiting. They think, feel, and act in ways that demonstrate the

devaluation of their group and of themselves as members of that group. (P.21)

Within these levels agents may also act in ways that express internalised notions of entitlement and privilege, which is referred to as *internalised domination*. In this aspect agents have been socialised in a way that their behaviours and feelings show that they expect to be treated well and accommodated by targets. Harro in Adams (2000) argues that people are socialized through families, media, religion etc. about what rules to follow, what roles to play, what assumptions to make, what to believe, and what to think, for example white people in South Africa seem to have been socialized to believe that white means good and black means bad.

Young in Adams (2000) describes oppression by five 'faces': Exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. *Exploitation* occurs through a steady process of the transfer of the results of the labour of one social group to benefit the other social group. *Marginalisation* is identified when, "a whole category of people are expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination." (Adams 2000 p. 41). *Powerlessness* refers to when, "some groups do not regularly participate in making decisions that affect the conditions of their lives and actions, in this case they lack significant power, and the powerless have little or no work autonomy." (Adams *ibid.* p. 43).

Furthermore, the dominant group may reinforce its position by bringing the other groups under the measure of its dominant norms; this is argued by Young in Adams

(2000) as cultural *imperialism*. Lastly *violence* is considered to be when members of some groups live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property, which have no motive but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person. Bell's theory of oppression and social justice includes addressing racism and sexism.

### **2.2.1. Racism**

Racism leads to the subordination of one group by another and social structures work to protect the interests of the dominant group (McCarthy 1993). It may not always be the result of conscious intention, but on mistaken stereotypes, negative beliefs and patronising attitudes and beliefs that hinder expectations and create practices that hinder opportunities people have. According to Bell in Adams (1997), racism is not just a system, which stigmatises and violates the dominated group, but it also does psychic and ethical violence on the dominator group as well. The argument goes further saying that racism functions through over conscious prejudices, discrimination and unconscious attitudes and behaviours of the society that define and reinforce white supremacy.

In some American Universities there have been some reported racist practices on African-American students. For example, Bradley (2003) and Hackworth (2003) reported that at one University in the U.S.A. a white man attacked a black woman. She said the white attacker approached her, grabbed her by her ponytail and pushed her against the car. She claimed the attacker said, "No one wanted a nigger to be

president of the students union". This incident happened during the student council president campaign of that University.

At the Penn State University, African Americans were harassed. Winbush (2001) states:

Harassing e-mail to African-American students spread faster than a computer virus threatening them with death. All but ignored by the campus administration, matters took a dramatic turn when a body of an African-American male was found just 20 miles from the campus. LaKeisha Wolf, then president of Penn States' Black Caucus, whose life was threatened, was escorted across campus with bodyguards and wore a bullet-proof vest. (P.5)

Social justice education theory in Adams (2000) holds that in modern societies people referred to as whites are privileged through social power over the social group of blacks. In South Africa in this sense, white people are privileged over Africans, Indians and Coloureds. Therefore this research investigates if Lesotho students at UND just by being black like black South Africans experience racism.

It has also been noticed that racism is not simply a white versus black groups, but also there is also *horizontal racism or oppression* that operates within subordinate groups, based on their internalised oppression or prejudices. In this system there is mistreatment of members of the dominated groups. For example, there is still hostility between Indians, Coloureds and Blacks in South Africa. One group still looks down upon the others due to stereotypes they have against each other. Whites

dominate all of these groups yet these groups mistreat each other. So Lesotho students might also experience this kind of oppression. Lesotho students may also experience racism from whites. Another particular form that horizontal oppression takes may be that of xenophobia which is being addressed in section 2.2.2.

Therefore it is of interest to know the extent which Lesotho students just by being black may experience this kind of racism here at the University of Natal. It might be true that those laws, which segregate people, have been abolished but it is going to take a long time for everything to be equal to every body.

There could also be an *internalised racism or oppression*, in which black people have been forced or socialised in an oppressive environment and that they agree to their own oppression, so much that they see this practice as part of their culture (Lipsky 1997). Young in Adams (2000) also argues that racism occurs when people operate out of the belief that there are fundamental characteristics attached to people of a particular group and this belief becomes institutionalised in the structures and practices of society, organisations or social groups. In South Africa black people experienced internalised racism for a long period so much that it is going to take another long period to phase out. Therefore this study seeks to explore whether this type of oppression confronts Lesotho Students at UND.

### 2.2.2. Xenophobia

Xenophobia is regarded as fear and hatred of citizens towards foreigners. Growther (1995), Hunt (1996), Reynolds and Venue (1987) refer to xenophobia as:

An intense dislike or fear of strangers or people from other countries, deep dislike of foreigners or things foreign and or a psychological state of hostility or fear towards outsiders. (p.2)

According to Harris (2001), in South Africa foreigners are often blamed for the problems that the country face and a new black-to-black racism express itself in the demeaning phrase for African immigrants. In the new South Africa the shift of political power has brought about new discriminatory practices and victims. The foreigner seems to stand at a site where identity, racism and violent practices are reproduced. Even though Lesotho students are here for a short period of time they might experience this type of oppression, because they are foreigners in this country. This can be related to the theory of *horizontal oppression or racism*, whereby members of the subordinate group mistreat or marginalize the other subordinate group. The link between horizontal oppression and xenophobia is that this is not just hostility towards foreigners, as it does not seem to apply to white foreigners. It is argued here that xenophobia is specifically directed towards black foreigners.

### 2.2.3. Sexism

In Adams (1997), it is stated that sexism is the cultural, institutional, and individual set of beliefs and practices that privilege men, subordinate women, and denigrate values and practices associated with women. During the World Conference against Racism, Gender and Discrimination in Durban, 2001, it was discussed and observed that various types of discrimination seem not to affect men and women in the same way. That is why in most cases gender discrimination occurs concurrently with other forms of discrimination, such as racial, ethnic or and religious discrimination. Women tend to face higher rates of violence. In some societies gender-based violence may be perceived as justified by racial, national, cultural or religious traditions. Sometimes women's ethnic or religious communities prevent them from seeking or attaining positions of power.

Adams (1997) indicates that people are socialised in a way that women should defer to male authority and not be authorities themselves. For example, Roberts (2003) states:

It took me time before I realized with some horror that women were seen by many males, including famous Christian teachers of the past, practically as creatures that exist to service them, as inferiors- and that this dreadful state of affairs had been justified with pseudo-scientific theory, the purpose of which was both to make women accept such a status as natural and to excuse males from feeling guilty about suppressing their sisters' rights. (P.3)

Cooper in Hodgson (1999), also noticed that in his congregation women were not allowed to teach Sunday school classes or permitted to preach in church. The church was completely run by men, even though women contributed a lot through their organisations within the same church. In support of this Roberts (2003) argues that structures in the society still keep men in dominant positions and women in subordination positions. She says:

The Catholic Church will not admit women priests. Men are still paid more than women. It is mostly men that make both the laws and wars, and sit in judgement. (P.3)

This study therefore seeks to explore whether this type of oppression confronts Lesotho students at UND.

## **2.3. Experiences of Foreign students**

### **2.3.1 International research on foreign students**

It seems there are mixed findings about the experiences of different students in different countries. For example, Huffman (2001) indicates that her experience in Prague was excellent, because the professors helped her very much with her studies. On the other hand Atkinson (2001) has mixed feelings because she indicated that although she had a good time of meeting and mingling with people from different cultures, but it was difficult to get a friend. She does not say why it was difficult. One

may expect same mixed feelings of the experiences of Lesotho students studying at UND, which is what this research is trying to explore.

### **2.3.2 Local research on foreign students**

There is limited literature on experiences of foreign students in South African Universities. Research indicates mixed feelings among foreign students studying in South African Universities. At Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), foreign students felt that they were being discriminated against badly by black South Africans. They felt that black South Africans were not welcoming. Shindondola's study (2002) focused on international students' experiences at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU). In this study four themes were investigated; their experiences of xenophobia, the exploration of the nature and scale of xenophobia directed toward these students, causes of xenophobia in South Africa and the challenges facing international students in South Africa. Twenty-six students from seventeen different countries were interviewed. The conclusion made out of this study was that foreign students at RAU University felt discriminated against by South Africans. They felt most South Africans treated them in a racist fashion, and they were not welcomed in this country. For example during an interview by Shindondola (2002) one of them said:

These people are very rejecting. I find it difficult to integrate because of the way I am treated by South Africans. They treat us like parasites. They look at us with reservation. Once they realise that you are

foreign, they think you fled your country due to economic problems, hunger or employment. They do not even think that one could flee because of civil war. The only thing they think about is that we are here to compete with them for jobs and other state benefits. (P.15)

However the above research shows that most of the respondents generally displayed self-confidence. They said they hung out or socialised with white South Africans rather than their black counterparts. One student from Zimbabwe says, "I socialize most of the time with non-South Africans" (Shindondola 2002, p.20)

At the same time black South Africans give foreign students bad names if they mix with whites. Shiro from Kenya said:

By mixing with whites, I have been called names such as coconut, referring to me as being black on the outside and white on the inside. (p. 20)

It was also discovered in this research that it was difficult for foreigners to get accommodation at RAU University. First preference was given to South African students, regardless of how far a students' country of origin was. "In most cases foreign students could apply to get a place in a residence only after the first semester." (Shindondola *ibid.* p.22) This could be regarded as oppression that has been institutionalised through rules and regulations of that University. Omi from DRC expressed his disappointment as follows:

My application was unsuccessful. I do not know why they did not make sure I get a place to stay, when they know I am coming from so far. Now I have to travel everyday and it is costly and not safe. (p. 22)

This study uses the term international students referring to all foreign students studying at RAU, but it is clear through the findings that black African foreign students experiences are different from white foreign students, which might be seen as horizontal oppression. One student from Rwanda complained:

There are a lot of Europeans here, Chinese and even African Americans, but they are not treated like us black foreigners. Black South Africans have superiority complex. Just because I am from a poor country, I am looked down upon. (p.15)

White foreign students also see this treatment. They are also aware that Black and white South Africans treat them differently. Hamshah from Turkey pointed out:

It seems South Africans, both black and white; their idea of a foreigner is just a black foreigner. They attach all different negative connotations when they speak about foreigners. They forget that there are white-skinned foreigners like myself, who can easily be criminals as well. (p.16)

An article written by Kearney (1999) indicated that there was no overt racism at the University of Natal-Durban. Foreign students worked hand in hand with both black and white South African students. However she argues that on social gatherings whites cluster together while blacks also form their own groups. On some interviews with few foreign students, she concluded that some international students suffer a lot because of the xenophobic environment, which is rife outside the campus,

especially from Zulu people, who seemed to be threatened by their presence in this country.

Her study fails to indicate the kind of relationship between foreign students and lecturers. It fails also to describe social relations in the residences between foreign and local students. This study seems to generalise the experiences of all international students, yet different groups of people might be influenced differently. The study also did not explore whether white foreign students are affected by racism just like black foreign students in South Africa.

Ndlela (2001) spoke to some international students at the University of Natal-Durban. Most students said black South African students are not friendly to them. They said that they are xenophobic, and they stick to their own cultural groups without making any effort to learn about other people's cultures and lifestyles. Some said white South African students are most helpful than their fellow black South Africans. However the University of Natal was making an effort to engender awareness of different cultures and celebrate diversity by developing cultural awareness programmes.

Dr Roshen Kishun, the Director of Natal University International Students office when interviewed by Dell in Focus (2001), suggested that SADC students should be treated like South Africans, especially in relation to fees paid by international students. Ramphele (1999) in Shindondola (2002) also argues that international students are faced with a problem of expensive study permits and visas. Furthermore the situation

is also worsened by the fact that in many cases in South Africa all foreigners are being perceived as "illegal immigrants." Therefore foreign students do not feel free to walk around in towns of this country.

In Harris's research (2001) on foreign experience during South Africa's transition, only 25 out of 100 responses were received from the questionnaires delivered, which seem not to constitute a statistical representation of the population sample. The main focus of this study was xenophobia, crime and violence on immigrants.

Studies conducted by Sinclair (1998-1999) and Morris (1998) in Harris (2002) reveals that xenophobia impacts directly on foreign identity, and that through this oppression foreigners feel foreign, which indicates an element of oppression against foreign students in South Africa. The conclusions made indicated that foreigners experience hostility from South Africans. These studies did not though investigate foreign students in South African universities.

The above literature indicates an element of oppression against foreign students in South Africa. However it has been indicated earlier it fails to say anything about the relationship between South African lecturers, non-academics and foreign students. It also fails to say anything about the relationship between foreign students themselves. So this study therefore examines whether Lesotho students studying at UND experience oppression especially: racism, xenophobia sexism, religion and any other form of oppression.

This study seeks to explore experiences of racism, on the grounds that Lesotho students studying at UND may experience racism because of being black like black South Africans, or any other form of oppression like sexism. This study also seeks to explore their experiences of xenophobia, especially from black South Africans who have been the most disadvantaged in the past system, in relation to education. It may be possible that they may feel threatened by Lesotho students, by competing with them in the job market.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

When I opted to write this thesis I thought it would be easy to find information from Lesotho students. I felt confident that as a Mosotho student, well known person who participates in Basotho meetings and cultural gatherings, I would encounter very few problems in eliciting information from them by asking questions in a form of questionnaires and interviews. However it was not easy.

The most difficult part was that I was staying far from the participants' residences, and all of them were writing their final examinations. So it was very difficult to get hold of them. It was difficult to give them questionnaires. Even after giving them it was difficult to collect them. Due to time constraints they could not bring them to my residence, and I could not find a neutral place so that they could submit them. However, some were able to bring them to the computer room at night where I used to be almost every day. I also had to catch some of them on Sundays when they attended their church services. Some did agree to allow me to go to their rooms for interviews. I interviewed some of them in one classroom, where we agreed to meet.

### **3.2. The type of study**

The survey was chosen by the researcher to be the vehicle of carrying out this study. Babbie (1999) argues that the survey is used on explanatory purposes and individuals may be used as respondents or informants. "Survey research is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly" ( Babbie *ibid.*, p.234)

Surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events. (Cohen and Manion 1997, p. 83)

The survey was chosen for this research because the research site was easily accessible to the researcher, as she is a student at the same University. Data collection was carried out while the researcher carried out her own studies. "This researcher is given opportunity to look at what is taking place in situation, rather than at second hand." (Cohen and Manion 2001, p. 305) and also:

In a natural setting it is difficult for the researcher who wishes to be covert not to act as a participant. If the researcher does not participate there is little to explain his presence, as he is very obvious to the actual participants. (Cohen and Manion 2001, p. 187)

### **3.3. Reliability and validity of data**

Validity and reliability of data had to be maintained through triangulation. Triangulation is whereby two or more data collection methods are used in a research.

“Validity in a qualitative data might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, in a quantitative data it might be addressed through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of the data.” Reliability in a qualitative research can be regarded as “a fit between what researchers’ record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched.” Reliability in a quantitative research is concerned with “precision and accuracy.” (Cohen and Manion 2001, pp.105-119)

According to Babbie (2001) reliability is all about, consistency and dependability of data: the measurements are accurate and trustworthy in such a way that is the same instruments should be used by different researchers should obtain same or similar results. Therefore reliability assures validity.

### **3.4 Data collection**

#### **3.4.1 Sample population**

For the purposes of this study it was of importance that the Lesotho students studying at The University of Natal-Durban (UND) be a source of data over and above the observation conducted by the researcher. As part of the research process

a sample population had to be identified, because one cannot study the whole group of foreign students at UND.

It is always impossible to reach members of the desired group for which the investigator is concerned; consequently, there is the need to draw out sample especially where generalisation is going to be made and the desired group too large to be reached. (Jegede 1999 p.113)

Cohen and Manion (1989) also argue that one cannot either make observation of all members of the population one is interested in. Therefore there is a need for a selection of sample among the data that might be collected and studied. Then in this study 18 out of 181 Lesotho students were selected as a sample. They were taken randomly because this group of Lesotho students is homogeneous as indicated earlier. For example they speak the same language. Babbie (1999) argues that probability sampling provides a group of respondents whose characteristics may be taken to reflect those of the larger population.

### **3.4.2 Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaires gather information from people in a non-threatening way, rather than watching them. It is an instrument which measures what people like, dislike, think and the experiences they had or have at present. (Cohen et al. 2001 and Jegede 1999). "It is a cheap, easy and rapid method of obtaining information." (Nisbet and Entwistle 1970, p 53).

Respondents were allowed self-expression through open-ended questions. Closed questions were useful in that they generated frequencies of responses, which were easy to analyse.

The questionnaire was designed in three sections, each with formal open-ended and closed questions. The first section was geared towards the day-to-day life behaviour of Lesotho students in order to find their relationship with the South Africans at UND. The other section asked the participants to explain their experiences in relation to racism and or xenophobia, and any other form of oppression at UND. The last section examined the solutions to the problems encountered by the respondents in relation to those forms of oppression they experience at UND.

Of the 18 questionnaires issued to Lesotho students, 16 were completed and returned, thus recording a 90% return rate.

Although it was said earlier that a questionnaire is a cheap and easy method of collecting data, on the other hand it has some disadvantages. The following are listed from the Evaluation Cookbook (2003):

Questionnaires, like many evaluation methods occur after the event, so participants may forget important issues.

Questionnaires are standardized so it is not possible to explain any points in the questions that participants might misinterpret.

Open-ended questions can generate large amounts of data that can take a long time to process and analyse.



Respondents may answer superficially especially if the questionnaire takes a long time to complete. Respondents may not be willing to answer the questions, they might not wish to reveal the information or they might think that they will not benefit from responding. (p.1)

In the APSSA (2003) it is also pointed out that:

There is no assurance that the intended respondent understands the questions, no assurance that the intended respondent actually completed the form and that there is no opportunity to interact with the respondent to clarify, probe, or seek substantiation. (p.1)

In addition to what has been stated earlier in StatPac (2003) it is argued that questionnaires allow little flexibility to the respondent with respect to response format and:

Nearly ninety percent of all communication is visual, gestures and other visual cues are not available with written questionnaires. The lack of personal contact will have different effects depending on the type of information being requested. (p.1)

Although the return rate was 90%, some of the questions were not answered, especially open-ended questions. Some of the answers showed that the respondents did not understand the questions, which means clarification was needed. Some answers contradicted, which shows that the respondents may have forgotten what they said earlier. For example, one would say, "Zulus are good people" yet in another answer say, "Zulus are very selfish, they can not compromise to speak English if they are with us, yet they know we do not understand their language." So it was difficult

to probe the participant and ask her/him to clarify the answers. To address the need to explore data in greater depth interviews were also used.

### **3.4.3 Interviews**

The interviews were used for the purposes of data collection and validation of other methods used. They were used in order for the researcher to evaluate the tone of voice or the body gestures the respondents make. These helped by enriching the researchers' understanding and interpretation of data collected. In Seidman (1991) another purpose of these interviews is stated as to get to the root and understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of these experiences.

Some interviews were held on one to one personal bases, some were held in-groups of three. Due to the involvement of participants in their final examinations 12 students were able to turn up for interviews, which were composed of 7 females and 5 males, their ages ranging from 24-45. This limitation was not so much felt to be serious as the data was consistent across all the interviews. Due to time limit recording was done by a tape recorder. This helped the researcher in that when making the summaries of what the participants said, for example if something was not clear, the researcher returned to the tape recorder and checked for accuracy. (Seidman *ibid.*)

The interview questions were semi-structured. The semi-structured interview is an open situation that gives flexibility and freedom for both the researcher and the

participants. However the questions mostly centred on the content of the questionnaire and they centred round the experiences of Lesotho students at this campus (Edgewood) in relation to oppression especially on racism and or xenophobia, sexism or any other form of oppression.

The interviews were conducted in Sesotho because:

-In order for both the interviewer and interviewee to be free, fluent and to understand each other, which was the case because every body was free to express and tell his or her stories. One of them said after the interview, "Oh! I was so frustrated that you were going to interview me in English."

-Time was limited; I did not want to waste their time by thinking about how to say their experiences in English. I know English is a problem to us because it's a second language.

I learned from the questionnaires that some of the questions needed clarification, so during the interviews I was able to ask one questions in more than two ways if the respondent was not clear of the question.

There is an argument that one of the characteristics of matching the interviewer with the respondent is, "The ability to speak the home language of the respondent is essential." (Babbie 2001, p.251)

Lastly the responses from interviews were then translated into English and transcribed into field notes, which were then categorised into themes.

#### **3.4.4 Observation**

According to Cohen and Manion (ibid. p.188), "In observation studies investigators are able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features." Babbie (2001) also points out:

- Observation can be done anywhere
- It forces the observer to familiarise with the subject
- It allows previously unnoticed or ignored aspects to be seen
- People's actions are probably more telling than their verbal accounts and observing these are valuable (pp.294 -295).

Observation involved the recording of data, which could not easily be picked up through questionnaires and the interview processes. It involved the recording of my own observations of what took place in my classrooms residence, computer LANs, toilets, libraries, and kitchens, and so on at UND campus. This has been indicated within the data analysis of findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Lesotho students studying at The University of Natal-Durban (Edgewood campus), in relation to oppression in the form of racism, xenophobia, sexism or any other form of oppression. This chapter will present the major themes and categories following the form of analysis proposed by Marshall and Rossman (1995) in DeVos et al. (1998). So below is a provision of an analysis of data collected through interviews and the researchers' observations.

Results will be discussed by referring to table 1. Table one shows the themes and categories that have been identified from the information given by the respondents, "The essential task of categorizing is to bring together into provisional categories those units that are apparently related to the same content." (DeVos et al. 1998, p. 339).

During interviews the following themes emerged: (1) Racism, (Lesotho students' experiences of both vertical and horizontal oppression), (2) Xenophobia, especially by black South Africans against Lesotho students, and (3) Sexism, which are the Lesotho students' views or perceptions on the relationships between male students and female lecturers.

During the interviews it was interesting to note that all of the participants are aware that racism prevails in their institution but not all of them are aware of the differences between racism and xenophobia.

## 4.2. RESULTS

This form of presentation follows that proposed by Marshall and Rossman (1995) in DeVos et al. (1998).

**TABLE 1: THEMES AND CATEGORIES**

4.2.1. Theme one---Racism	4.2.2 Theme two---	4.2.3 Theme three---Sexism
<p><b>4.2.1.1. (<i>White people mistreating people of colour</i>)</b></p>	<p><b>Xenophobia</b></p>	<p>4.2.3.1. Lesotho students' views or perceptions of the relationship between white male students and black female lecturers.</p>
<p>4.2.1.1.1. Lesotho students' experiences with white lecturers.</p>	<p>4.2.2.1. Lesotho students' experiences with black South African students.</p>	
<p>4.2.1.1.2. Lesotho students' experiences with white students.</p>	<p>4.2.2.2. Lesotho students' experiences with white South Africans students.</p>	
<p>4.2.1.1.3. Lesotho students' views or perceptions of the relationships between white students and black lecturers.</p>		
<p><b>4.2.1.2. Horizontal oppression (<i>People of colour mistreating other people of colour</i>)</b></p>		
<p>4.2.1.2.1. Lesotho students' experiences with Indian students.</p>		
<p><b>4.2.1.3 Internalised oppression (<i>targets vs. themselves</i>)</b></p>		
<p>4.2.1.3.1. Lesotho students' views or perceptions of themselves as black students.</p>		

## **4.2.1. Racism**

### **4.2.1.1. White people mistreating people of colour**

#### **4.2.1.1.1. Lesotho students' experiences with white lecturers**

The findings indicate that fact that Lesotho students are black like black South Africans means that they experience the same power imbalance as between white and black South Africans, especially because it is difficult to differentiate them from black South Africans in terms of colour and physical appearance. It has been indicated in chapter two that through internalised domination an agent group (in this case white South Africans) "act in a way that express internalised notions of entitlement and privilege." (Adams 1997, p. 21). In this research the dominant group (Whites) are privileged by birth, therefore they exploit and reap unfair advantage over members of the subordinate group (Blacks). In this context Lesotho students seem to experience racism. A male respondent who said confirms this:

In some classes if a lecturer is white, and a black student answers the question, the answer is not taken seriously by the lecturer, but if it is answered by a white student the lecturer becomes happy and passes remarks such as "excellent", "good point" or "well done".

It is surprising to see lecturers behaving this way because learners' potential in class does not go along with the skin colour of a person. This is in line with Rand (1963) when writing:

Even if it were proved – which it is not – that the incidence of men of potentially superior brain power is greater among the members of certain races than among the individual, it would be irrelevant to one's judgement of him. A genius is a genius, regardless of the number of morons who belong to the same race and a moron is a moron, regardless of the number of geniuses who share his racial origin. (p.2)

However there is a perception that in this institution some lecturers give students marks according to their race. A female reported:

It is even worse when receiving marks for the assignments and tests, if you are black you never get above 70%, but white students get up to 90% and above

Bagleys' research (1975) on testing the intellectual capability of races also shows that there is no difference in intelligent behaviour between different racial groups and it is not good for learners to be discriminated just because of their race. (Blake 1995, p.135) asserts:

The question of race relations in schools is a critical one for the development of our society. It is unlawful to discriminate against individuals on account of their race.

One female respondent indicated that she had thought lecturers would be very helpful to them in class work, only to find that as long as white students understand the concept being taught, the lecturers move forward and do not care whether black students catch it up or not. She points out:

In a computer class, the tutor was so fast that we did not catch anything, because some of us it was our first time to use a computer while white students knew a lot about them.

In the lecture room, another form of internalised domination is noticeable, and it takes the form of ignoring the groups other than Whites. All respondents reported that students sit in groups of their races. During the focus group some of them reported:

In classrooms we sit in groups of Blacks, Indians, Coloureds and Whites. Most of the time white lecturers tend to focus on the side of where white students sit. Sometimes if he or she asks of where we understand or not, if a white student say yes, oh, every thing is just fine, no second opinion is asked from other racial groups.

Hardiman and Jackson in Adams (1997) assert:

Oppression is perpetuated from generation to generation as new generations become its heirs and are shaped in its climate, Agent, due to their power to define reality, see themselves and are seen by others as normal or proper, whereas targets are likely to be labelled as deviant, evil, abnormal, substandard or defective.(p.20)

So the above statement shows that despite the end of apartheid, white academics at the University of Natal- Edgewood still treat black people as abnormal. The above quotation is clarified through some of the experiences of Lesotho students. They claim that due the colour of their skin, they cannot be separated from black South

Africans, therefore experience the treatment black South Africans get from white South Africans.

One-day one white lecturer was impressed about the good presentation we made; we were clear, confident and straight to the point. After our presentation the other groups presented. Some white students groups were not as good as ours, they even took more time to what has been allocated for the presentation, and to our surprise when the marks were out we had the lowest marks of all the presentation. Our group consisted with black people only.

In support of the above statement, one female respondent also could recall one incident whereby, she thinks it wasn't fair that the lecturer treated them like that, and here is her story:

Assessment of activities does not cater for disadvantaged students like us blacks (including Lesotho students). For example, during activities we are always told to be as creative as possible, we are told to make black and white pictures only, but Whites, Indians and coloureds bring ready made, colourful and expensive materials. During presentations tutors do not comment at all and at the end they get higher marks, we get less no matter how hard we try.

As it has been indicated earlier that agents see themselves as normal, Lesotho students just because of being black like black South Africans experience this attitude from white Lecturers. Some of the responses show that they are very angry, because they say these things disturb their studies, they had to say:

These things affect us because some of these Whites do not care whether you are from Lesotho or South Africa, in their eyes we are all the same, we are all black, therefore all stupid, therefore we have to be treated the same.

Like one female responded indicated that in one test they were given equal marks for theory, practical, and every subtopic, yet they were not even sitting together in class. It was just because they were the only two black students in that class. However one male respondent seemed to be confused of whether he experienced racism from the lecturer or from a student, here is his story:

One day a white student was asked by our white lecturer to make tea for him, that student asked me to do it because he was rushing to a toilet. I made it, but the lecturer refused to take it, when that student came back he asked him to make it again. I was confused, because I did not know whether, the white lecturer did not like me to make tea for him or whether the white student thought I was suitable for making tea, because I am black or what.

#### **4.2.1.1.2. Lesotho students' views or perceptions of the relationships between white students and black lecturers**

One would think the position of lecturers put them on the position of having greater social power as compared to students. However, that is not necessarily the case. If a person is white, it does not matter whether he or she is a student, she or he will be on the agent or dominant group. "In the system of racism there is always unfair treatment of people who belong to different races, or there is that belief that some races are better than others." (Hornby 2000) Through the interviews some Lesotho

students have observed that white students do not respect black lecturers. During the focus discussion respondents agreed with each other and supported some of the experiences:

White students do not respect black lecturers; it was horrible in one HIV/AIDS classroom, because white students intimidated one lecturer every day.

To clarify what has been said above some respondents have to say:

They (white students) believed she (black lecturer) did not deserve the qualifications she had, one could see that they thought she might have cheated somewhere in order to be there. (Male respondent)

Some of them just complain that they do not understand what they are (black lecturers) teaching, or sometimes they complain that these black lecturers hate them (female respondent).

In one of the classes taught by a black lecturer, white students used to register their names and leave, some leave even without asking for permission (female respondent).

In South Africa vertical racism does not affect black people only; even Indians and Coloureds are affected. There is an assumption made by the respondents that white students still do not respect Indian lecturers, some of them reported:

There are two lecturers in one science class, one Indian and a White. White students behave differently to both lecturers; they make a lot of noise during the lessons taught by an Indian lecturer. They capitalise on slight mistakes, maybe on slipperiness of the tongue and ask many questions, arguing that he was not supposed to have said that.

All of the above experiences seem to disturb Lesotho students' studies. Most of the respondents complain that these white student's behaviour of arguing on irrelevant issues take too much of their learning time.

#### **4.2.1.1.3. Lesotho students' experiences with white students**

In the literature review, it was indicated that theorists contend that white people have been socialised in a way that they believe they are better than people of colour. Some respondents agreed with what one male respondent experience:

One night we (black students) wanted to watch a European soccer final match, we found one white guy already in the TV room watching a movie, we asked him to be kind and allow us to change the channel, he did not agree until we phoned the matron (also white), who did not help us anyhow.

Earlier in this chapter it was indicated that Lesotho students are disturbed by the way students sit in class. Generally, students sit according to their races. As a result, students from Lesotho find themselves in the middle of these groups not knowing where to sit. As an example in the presence of the other four respondents, one

respondent indicated that he has observed that white students do not want to sit next to black people in any way, he says:

One day I was sitting next to a group of white students in the class, there was an empty chair between me and another black student, there came a white student, when he saw that he was forced to sit in between two black people, he asked me to swap sits, I asked him why he said he wanted to sit next to his friend, I did not agree because I knew he did not want to sit between us (black people). However he sat uncomfortably in between us because the lecture had begun.

In addition to this another male respondent had a similar story to tell:

One day in our class there was an empty chair next to a group of white students, there came a black student towards this group, immediately a white guy sitting next to the other empty chair put his bag on that chair, I could realise that he did not want this black guy to sit next to him, so this black guy had to look for another chair.

However, there is an indication that some white students act in a non-racist way, for example some interviewees report:

I find white students more welcoming than black South African students. Whites are eager to learn other people's cultures.



I stayed in a white dominated residence, those girls were very nice to me, and so much that even now some of them are my friends.

#### **4.2.1.2. Horizontal oppression (People of colour mistreating other people of colour)**

According to Hardiman and Jackson in Adams (1997), horizontal oppression is:

The conscious and/or unconscious attitudes and behaviours exhibited in interactions between members of the same target group that support and stem from internalised subordination. (p.22)

Horizontal oppression creates division among the members of the targeted groups.

##### **4.2.1.2.1. Lesotho students' experiences with Indian students**

As it has been indicated earlier that even among the target groups there are still some people who act in an oppressive way to the members of other target groups. It has also been indicated that that Lesotho students in this University are treated just like black South Africans because of the colour of their skin. Indians also discriminate against African students, for example:

One day I was in a queue in the LAN, I was standing in front of an Indian lady. While waiting there I saw my friend who was already working on the computer. I went there to greet him, when I came back it was my turn to have a computer if it could be available, immediately it was available and I went

to use it, ah! To my surprise the Indian lady said it was her turn to use the computer because I was not in a queue, we quarrelled, until she reported to the consultant (an Indian), he also ordered me to step aside and allow that lady to use the computer.

As a researcher and also a Lesotho student studying at this University, I have also observed that in the ladies toilets, Some Indian Ladies do not like to use a toilet, which has been used immediately by a black person. Whenever we are queuing in the ladies toilet and I am following an Indian lady, if there is a free toilet and this Indian see that a black person has used it, she would allow you to pass her, if you ask her why she would tell you that she does not like prefer using that toilet she prefers the other one. This does not happen to me alone, it happens to so many black ladies, so much that we discussed about it in my residence, and I was surprised to learn that other black ladies are aware of this.

Some times I think people seem to discriminate against other people but I think some times they do it unconsciously, for example, every time I come across a group of Indians I know that they would not make a way for me, they usually walk like as if there is no body coming up their way, I am always forced to dodge them so that I would not bump into them, they behave like as if they are the only ones who have a right of way. This does not affect me only I have heard other people talking about it. So it is a bad experience on us because we are from a country whereby people respect each other so much when passing each other on the way we give each other a chance of passing.

### **4.2.1.3. Internalised oppression (targets versus themselves)**

#### **4.2.1.3.1. Lesotho students' views or perceptions of themselves as black students.**

Hardiman and Jackson in Adams (1997) assert:

People who have been socialised in an oppressive environment, and who accept the dominant group's ideology about their group, have learned to accept the definition of themselves that is hurtful and limiting. They think, feel, and act in ways that demonstrate the devaluation of their group and of themselves as members of that group. For example, internalised subordination is operating when target group members question the credentials or abilities of members of their own social group without a cause, yet unquestioningly accept that members of the agent group are qualified, talented, and deserving of their credentials. (p.21)

This is in line with some Lesotho students' observation that Black, Indian and Coloured students believe that Black tutors are not as educated as White tutors. For example, other respondents present with these respondents who stated:

There is one module, taught by two lecturers, an Indian and a White, they exchange within two weeks. During the weeks of this Indian lecturer if we do not understand any concept we prefer to go to the white lecturer than to ask an Indian lecturer, but if we are taught by a white lecturer and there is something that we do not understand, we ask him, we do not go to an Indian lecturer.

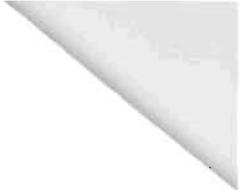
We are also to blame because we also allow ourselves to be oppressed because we do not say anything about these things, and we do not say we don't understand. If something is not clear to us in class. It is like as if we are afraid to be seen as stupid by white students.

It looks like as if Lesotho students also experience internalised oppression, because in most issues discussed during the interviews, there is absolutely nowhere they have stood up for themselves, they are also acting in a way that demonstrates the devaluation of their group (Blacks) and of themselves as members of that subordinate group.

#### **4.2.2. Xenophobia**

##### **4.2.2.1. Lesotho students' experiences with black South African students**

Xenophobia is defined as hatred or fear of foreigners by citizens in the Oxford English Dictionary (2000). Tshikere (1999) in Harris (2001) suggests that xenophobia represent a deep fear and dislike of the unknown, by South Africans towards foreigners. According to Harris (2001) it seems South Africans are unable to accommodate and tolerate differences.



Morris (1998) cited in Harris (ibid.) argues that apartheid isolated South African citizens from nationalities beyond Southern Africa. The isolation creates a hostility between South Africans and foreigners.

All of the evidence was showing exclusion by black South African students. Some of them experienced this exclusion in classrooms. When interviewed they had to say:

One day we were divided into groups in class, and we were to discuss and write issues that we have agreed upon down on a sheet of paper so that we can present afterwards. I was in a group of Zulu students, they discussed in isiZulu yet they knew that I do not understand that language. After a long time one of them said, "Let us discuss in English so that everybody understand what we are saying." One of them said, "No! This is high time that he learns (referring to me) isiZulu, this is KwaZulu Natal." To my surprise they continued with the discussion still communicating with their language. I felt excluded indeed; it was very painful to experience this. I felt that it was bad to study in a foreign country whereby locals behave like this. (Male)

In group discussions if you are in a group dominated by Zulus, they discuss in their language, and they do not care whether you understand or not. (Female)

It is even worse if a person comes for your help and in the process does not compromise his or her language, one of my respondents says:

They can come to you to seek help, especially academic, maybe in groups of two or three,

when you are still trying to help them, they change and continue to speak in their language without caring whether you follow or not, yet they came for your assistant. (Female)

Lesotho students are also denied access to the TV, which is supposed to serve all students' staying in the residences. They pointed out:

In the TV room if they found you listening to English news they switch to the other channels. If you ask why? They say they will listen to Zulu news. They do not sacrifice for us to listen to either English or Sesotho news. Sometimes some of them do not even bother to ask permission from you yet they found you already in the TV room. (Male)

We do not have a chance of listening to any news, because if you are watching sesotho news, they just switch to another channel where they can watch stories, when you ask them at least to switch to English news ah! Is like you are insulting them, (Hei! Batho bana ba nyonya sekhoaa hampe!) That is, (These people hate English!). I have realised that for them everything that is right here it is when is done in isiZulu. (Male)

What I have observed is that, in my residence Zulus want the TV programmes only to suit them. They behave like as if because this is South Africa, things should be done according to their interests and everything belongs to them yet we are all students. (Female)

One day I was watching TV with one Xhosa lady, some Zulu ladies arrive talking on top of their voices. We switched the TV volume up, they asked us why we are increasing the volume, and we told them that we are watching and listening to a story therefore they are making noise for us. They told us it was useless to watch that

program because it was being repeated, we said it did not matter because it was our first time to watch it. They said they would not stop talking then; it was so noisy in the TV room that day, because of the high volume of the TV plus the noise of those girls talking on the top of their voices. (Female)

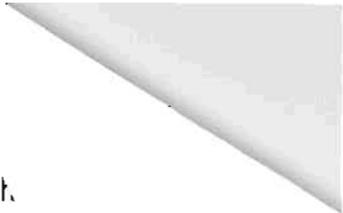
Most respondents feel exclusion in the residences, especially in meetings, whereby they think they have a right to contribute to the discussions held in there, but they are denied that chance by the local students. Some of them had to say:

In residences discrimination is alive. Zulu speaking people cannot sacrifice to speak English when they are with us. They are not welcoming people. They are different from us; we change automatically to English if we are with somebody who does not understand our language. (Male)

In residences meetings are held in isiZulu, so we (Lesotho students) are excluded in a way, it is as if this is done in purpose because they all know that we do not understand their language. (Female)

Zulus do not compromise by speaking English if they are with us, even if they came to seek help from you. (Male)

I have been in social gatherings with some Zulu students; they do not compromise to speak English when they are with other people. (Male)



Participants thought that because they are black, they were surprised to have been welcomed by black South Africans, when they first came to the country. To their surprise it was not the case. In agreement with others one had to say,

On my arrival here I did not feel comfortable to be in a classroom of mixed people (multiracial). I thought other black people will welcome me but it was not the case. (Female)

From what other respondents said one assumes that xenophobia in this institution does not affect foreigners from other countries like Lesotho only, because it seems even if you come from a different province other than KwaZulu Natal, you are still not welcome.

Some Zulus are not even aware that we come from a different country; they think we are from one of the provinces, therefore we are not Zulus and we do not belong here.

I think these people (Zulus) behave this way because they want to experience the feeling of being on the dominant side. They also believe that everybody should speak isiZulu while residing in KZN. I also think both Indians and Zulus want KwaZulu Natal to be known as their province, so each group can't sacrifice its language to another group. Zulus think if they speak English regularly, they will be undermining their own language, therefore in this process we (Lesotho students) suffer.

It has been mentioned earlier that xenophobia refers to, hatred or fear of the unknown by citizens towards foreigners. It is surprising that in South Africa Black people are the majority of those that have this fear towards foreigners,

especially black foreigners. This was indicated in Shindondola's research.  
(2002)

### **4.2.3 Sexism**

#### **4.2.3.1 Lesotho students' views or perceptions of the relationship between white male students and black or Indian female lecturers.**

The last theme, which emerged in this study, is sexism. It has been indicated in the literature review chapter that people are socialized in a way that women should defer to male authority. It looks like as if even in this situation some male students show an authoritarian behaviour over female lecturers. Some respondents reported that white male students dominate black and Indian female lecturers:

White male students do not respect Indian and black female lecturers, they are much better if they are taught by men, because in one of the lecturers, an Indian man used to shout them and they would listen to him and keep quite. (Male)

White male students intimidated a black female that was teaching us on Fridays. One could see through their questions that they were challenging, they believed that she did not deserve the qualifications she had. (Male)

White students do not pay attention in class no matter whether the lecturer is white or black, but it becomes worse when the lecturer is a black female. (Female)

Adams (1997) describes sexism as the cultural beliefs and practices that privilege men and subordinate women. So from the findings one is aware that black female lecturers experience both racism and sexism, while black male lecturers experience racism only.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is an attempt to explore the experiences of Lesotho students studying at the University of Natal Durban. The study reveals that most of the Lesotho students' views and perceptions are that specific forms of oppression affect most of them. Through their different experiences they seem to experience oppression in the form of racism, xenophobia and sexism, and interactions between the forms of oppression confirm the presence of internalised domination, horizontal oppression and so on.

Being an international student is no protection from prejudice and abuse, especially if you have a darker pigmentation. Black foreign students can expect to experience the same level of abuse, discrimination and stereotyping endured by any other black foreigner in the country. (Shindodola 2002, p.27)

There is evidence that Lesotho students share the common experiences of racism with black South African students, however they also experience xenophobia from the same black colleagues, because there is an evidence of exclusion of Lesotho students on the basis of language, for example, Zulu students speak English

whenever they are with white students but they do not speak English whenever they are with foreign students yet they know that they do not understand Isizulu.

There is also an observation of the interaction between racism and sexism. It seems it has gone to extent whereby white male students are undermining black female lectures' authority.

In conclusion I would say here are the following recommendations, which may help to minimize these practices:

- There should be a committee, which keeps on investigating on these issues, reports of this nature should be made, and people who practice as racism, xenophobia or sexism should be given advice of how to live happily with other people.
- All students should be exposed to a module on diversity diversity in education module, and it should be taught in the first semester, so that they should be aware of different peoples' behaviours or cultures.
- Lecturers should be advised to walk around in class and see to it that every student is included in group discussions.
- Lecturers need orientation that directs them in taking responsibility for their handling of these issues.

- Foreign students should be represented in every committee, for example in house committees, so that their problems would be discussed.
- Foreign students should be compelled to study a local language that is dominant in the campus and around the campus, so that they can be able to communicate with locals without any problem.

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## **FIELD NOTES FROM INTERVIEWS**

### **Male**

I am a first year student. Apart from my studies I sing for the school choir. This choir is completely dominated by black students. Some White students are interested in rugby while some Indians are interested in tennis. I have heard that in some games even if black people perform well they are not given awards; instead most awards are given to white students.

In time of financial constraints I usually seek help from Lesotho students, because I am very free to them and I believe they can be able to understand my problems better than other people. For example if I tell another mosotho student that "Ke robetse ka tlala" (I slept without food) he or she would understand me more than anybody else, even without saying lend me money or give me food.

I think it is a very good opportunity to us to study in this country (S.A) whereby women's rights are respected, because since we have been here we behave differently from home as basotho men. We listen to our women, we share ideas, we do not dominate them, and we respect them. For example the chairperson of our association as Lesotho students is a female. I think they are very empowered to live under this situation, unlike home whereby they are always treated as subordinates of men.

In classrooms-----If a lecturer is white and black student answers the question, the answer is not taken seriously by the lecturer, but if the question is answered by a white student the lecturer becomes so happy, and he or she even passes remarks such as; "excellent", "good point" or "well done". Sometimes I asked myself why? Is it because black students give wrong answers? No! I know the answers were correct; it is just a bad attitude of white people to black people being stupid.

It is even worse when receiving tests and assignments feedback. If you are black you can never get above 70%. I always range between 50% and 60%, but white students get up to 90% and over. Through my observation the highest mark for a black person is 70% in my classes.

We sit in-groups of Blacks, Indians, Coloreds and Whites in classrooms. One day there was an empty chair next to a group of white students. A black student came towards this group, immediately a white guy put his bag on that chair. I could realize that this white guy did not want this black guy to sit next to him.

One day we were divided into groups in class, and we were to discuss and right issues that we have agreed upon down on a sheet of paper so that we can present afterwards. I was in-group of Zulu speaking students, they discussed in isiZulu yet they new I do not understand the language. After a long time one of them said, "let us discuss in English so that everybody understand what we are saying." One of them said, "No! This is high time that he learns (referring to me) isiZulu, this is Kwazulu Natal." To my surprise they continue with their discussion like as if nothing

was wrong. I felt that exclusion; I felt that it is bad to study in a foreign country whereby locals behave like this. It was painful because I expected that in classrooms everybody was to communicate in English just like way back home (Lesotho).

Of late some Zulu people are trying to speak English when they are with me, others won't change anyhow, and I have decided to hang out with those who feel for me.

Indians are still far away from us, even if they know that we are not South Africans, They do not mix with us. One day I was on a queue in the LAN, I was standing at the front of an Indian. While we waited there, I saw one of my friends already working on the computer and I went to greet him. When I came back to the line it was at the time that another computer became free. I went to use it, ah! To my surprise the Indian lady said she is the one who is supposed to use that computer because I was not waiting on the line. We quarreled, until she reported me to the consultant who was also an Indian. He took her side and ordered me to step aside and allow the lady to use the computer. To my surprise, there were some other Zulu students queuing, who were supposed to speak for me, and advise the consultant that it was true I was on queuing. I thought, Oh! Is it because I am a foreigner? Or what is it, that these people can't say anything?

White students do not respect black lecturers. White students intimidated one black lecturer used to teach us HIV/AIDS on Fridays every time. It was horrible in that class.

#### Solutions

I think all students should be exposed to diversity in learning module, in every department. It should be taught in the first semester.

#### **Female**

I am a first year student, however I have realized that students in classrooms and out site classrooms sit or walk in-groups of White, Black, Indian and Colored. Some residences are black dominated while others are white dominated. Some white students told me that on their arrival, the matron told them to choose certain residences because the other residences were "too black" therefore it was noisy and a lot of stealing occurred in them. So they said she discouraged them for choosing those residences.

*In-group discussions in class, if you happen to be in a group of white students only, the point you raise is not taken into consideration, unless if it can be repeated by a white person. If again you are in a group dominated by Zulu speaking students, they discuss in isiZulu, they do not care whether you understand or not.*

White students do not pay attention in class, no matter whether the lecturer is white or black, but it becomes worse when a lecturer is black, especially a female one.

I find white students more welcoming than black South African students. To my observation Whites are eager to learn other people's countries. What I have also learned is that some Zulu people think Lesotho is just one of the provinces of South Africa, so they think we do not belong to their province, which is Kwazulu-Natal.

In residences meetings are held in isiZulu, so we as Lesotho students are excluded in a way, it is as if this planned because they know exactly that we do not understand their language. Every time it happens I leave the meeting.

As for our relationship as both male and female students, we treat each other with respect. Men do not dominate us, For example, in (LESA) Lesotho Students Association. There are four females and three males. And the president is a female.

Soccer is "too black" and Rugby is "too white". No body is discouraged or expelled from any sports, (my observation); it depends on individual's interests. For example I am right now from gymnasium.

### **Solutions**

I think there should be a committee that keeps on investigating on these issues, reports of this nature should be made and people who are behaving this way should be given advises on how to live with other people.

In classrooms teachers should be advised to walk around and see to it that other students are not excluded from group discussions.

### **Male**

I am a second year student. I play snooker and I was singing last year.

In classrooms Whites sit in their group, Indians in their group, Coloreds in their group and Blacks in their group also. Every group makes noise in class that it is difficult for us to understand what is being taught. We are not used to this type of situation whereby students do what ever they like.

In classrooms Zulus are friendly with us; maybe it is because they are in competition with Whites, Indians and Coloreds.

White lecturers pay attention to white students. I remember one day a white student was asked by white lecturer to make tea for him. That student asked me to do it because he was rushing to a toilet. I made it, but the lecturer refused to take it. When that white student came back he was asked to make it again. I felt humiliated, and I realized that the reason for that reaction was the colour of my skin.

In residences discrimination is alive. Zulu speaking people cannot sacrifice or compromise to speak English when they are with you. They are not welcoming

people. They are different from us; we change automatically to English if we are with somebody who does not understand our language.

In the TV room if they found you listening to English news they switch to the other channels. If you ask them why? They say they will still listen to Zulu news. They do not sacrifice for us to listen to either English or Sesotho news. Sometimes some of them they do not even bother to ask permission from you yet they found you in the TV room.

## **Solutions**

Lesotho students should be represented in every committee. For example in SRC, House committees and so on, in which these problems would be discussed.

## **Female**

I am in second year. On my arrival I did not feel comfortable to be in a classroom of mixed people (multiracial). I thought other black people will welcome me but it was not the case. I do not know whether it was because of language or because of my age, so they could not share any thing with me, as you can see I am not young.

When I first came arrive here, the pace of learning was too fast for me, and I thought lecturers would help to catch up, only to find that they do not care whether you understand or not, as long as white students follow, they do not care.

White students intimidate black lecturers. In one of the classes taught by a black lecturer, white students used to register their names and leave. Some of them left without giving any excuses.

White lecturers also on the other hand are impatient with black students. I remember in a computer class, this teacher was so fast that we did not catch anything. Some of us it was our first time to be exposed to a computer. White students knew a lot about the computers, they were allowed not to come to lecturers until examinations. I thought it was an advantage that other students new computers, because they would be used to help us, in so doing improving their knowledge also. Through my observation I could learn that she thought or believed that black people are stupid therefore he would not waste his time teaching them. I remember one day after receiving my test results. I came to another mosotho man to show him my disappointing marks so that he would help me, only to find that our marks are the same for practical, theory and every section on that paper. This taught me that, she gave us the same marks because we are from one country, therefore we are both stupid. (Laughter). You know we did not even sit together in class or during that test.

In classrooms we sit in-groups of Blacks, Indians, Coloreds and Whites. Most of the time the lecturers focus on the side where white students sit. Some times if he or she asks whether we understand, if a white student can say yes, oh! Every thing just

goes on, they do not ask for second opinions from other students. We are also to blame because we also allow to be oppressed because we do not say we don't understand it seems we are afraid to be seen stupid by white students.

When I first came here, I stayed in a white dominated residence; these girls were nice to me, so much that some of them are my friends. I am no more staying with them because I couldn't study well with them. They did not understand when I said I do not understand a concept; they would be so surprised why I find such an easy thing to be so difficult, so I decided to shift to a black residence.

I did not experience anything bad in that residence, however an incidence occurred next to me. One mosotho woman was accused of exposing her body in public, she used to go outside her room with bare breasts, she was fined, and from there she was accused with so many things which were not true, finally she shifted to a black residence. This incidence surprised us because in our culture it is not bad for a woman not to cover her breasts while the only people in the house are women, but on public places we breast feed our kids freely while it is not the case in a white people's culture.

### **Three males and one female**

We walk and sit in-groups of Whites, Indians, Coloreds and Blacks

(Male)---- One day I was in class, white students were sitting next to me; there was an empty chair between another black student and me. There came a white guy, when he saw that he was forced to sit next between two black students, he asked me to exchange sits, I asked him why he said because he wants to sit next to his friend, I did not agree, he sat there uncomfortably.

(Male)---There was a white lecturer whom the white students intimidated; they believed she did not deserve the qualifications she had. They thought she might have cheated somewhere in order to be there. Fortunately this came to the head of department's attention and it was addressed. Some of those students are in Diversity module, and they feel very sorry for what they did, because now they are learning about other people.

(Male)----In one presentation, one white lecturer was amazed about the good presentation we made; we were clear, confident and straight to the point. He was impressed. Some other white students groups were not as good as we were; they even took more time to what has been allocated for the presentation. To my surprise we scored the lowest marks.

(Male)---- White students do also not respect Indian teachers. For example in one science class, there are two teachers; the other one is an Indian while the other one is a white person. White students behave different to both lecturers; they make a lot of noise when an Indian teaches us. They capitalize on slide mistakes, maybe on slippery of the tongue and ask many questions, argue that he was not supposed to

have said that, which took too much of our time, and which was not even the point that the lecturer wanted to point out.

These things affect us because some of these white students and lecturers do not care whether we come from a different country or not, to them we are all black, and therefore need to be treated like black South Africans.

(Female)----- One day I was watching TV with one Xhosa lady, some Zulu ladies arrive talking on top of their voices. We switched the TV volume up, they asked us why we are doing that, and we told them that we are listening to a story we are watching therefore they are making noise for us. They told us that program we are watching is being repeated, so we said it does not matter, it is our first time to watch it. They said they wouldn't stop talking. So it was so noisy in the TV room that day, the noise of people shouting on top of their voices and the high volume of a TV.

(Male)----This reminds me of one night we wanted to watch a European soccer final. We found one white guy watching a movie on TV. We asked him to be kind and allow us to change the channel, we were many black students, and he disagreed. We had to phone the matron who did not help us, I think is because she is also a white person. We decided to sit in there and make noise for him by chatting to each other, and then he left.

(Male)---This also reminds me that, we as Sesotho speaking students have no chance of listening to the news. If you are watching Sesotho news when they arrive they ask you to change to the channel where they can watch the story, yet they do not allow us to watch English news, (Hei! Batho bana ba nyonya sekhoaa) meaning (Hey, These people hate English!) I have realized that for them everything that is right here it is when it is done in Zulu.

(Male)----When I arrived here, I was advised by the matron to choose a white residence because in a black residence Zulus are noisy and they are thieves, I chose a white residence, ah! My things are still stolen. In these residences black students are few, whenever he can make noise he is charged but if it is a white person making noise nothing is done or taken seriously.

(Male)---In my residence we live nicely together with Zulus, the only disturbing thing is language, they do not care whether you understand what they are discussing or not. For example they can come to you to seek for help of something, maybe in a group of three or four, when you are still trying to help you they change and continue and speak in isiZulu without caring whether you follow or not, yet they came for your assistant.

(Male)--- I think the reason why these people (Zulus) behave like this is because they want to experience the feeling of being on the dominant side. They also believe that everybody should speak isiZulu while residing in KZN. I also think Indians and Zulus want this province to be known as theirs. So each group can't sacrifice its

language to another group. Zulus think if they speak English regularly, they will be undermining their own language.

We live in peace with Lesotho ladies here, we respect them, and we do not dominate them like the way we do back home. They also respect us just like their colleagues.

As between ourselves as Lesotho students, we work hand in hand with each other, except for some few principals, who do not want to mix with us; maybe they still need that respect we give them back home. They do not come for help even if they have academic problems; so much they even fail some courses. They do not even attend LESA meetings. Maybe it is because they are used of being leaders.

### **Female respondent**

I am so surprised to see black people treating other black people badly just because the other person is foreign to them. In this province if you do not speak isizulu, some people take you as if you are half a person. One day I was in a taxi from Durban. I was sitting between two Zulus. They paid their fares to the driver; I also took out my R50.00 and gave it to the driver. One of the two people I am sitting next to told the driver that we are three in that R50.00. I told the driver that I am paying for myself only. After this most of the people in that taxi started talking and laughing, although I couldn't understand what was said, I could sense that they were talking about me. When I jumped off the taxi at Pinetown, one guy came and said he was sorry that people were talking about me in that taxi, I became angrier especially with him, because I did not understand why didn't he stop them and what was the use of telling me. In several times I have been left along the road because some drivers lied to me saying they would take me where I wanted to go, only to find that they were going to a different direction, sometimes they do this after you have paid.

What I have observed is, in my residence Zulus want the TV program to suit them only, the way they behave is like because this is in South Africa things should be done the way they want and everything belong to them.

White students do not respect black lecturers; they complain that they do not understand what they are teaching them. They sometimes complain that these tutors hate them.

One day one white student saw that I got more marks than his, he was so angry that he even went to see the tutor. I do not know how they discussed the matter. He was even angry with me saying he did not understand how I got those marks yet I came to him to ask for help before the test.

### **Three female respondents**

(Respondent one)---Some white tutors do not mark our scripts well, they write "well done" but the marks are so low that they do not correspond with the remarks made.

In my class white students do not respect black tutors, but what I have observed is that even some black students believe that black tutor are not as educated as white tutors.

(Respondent two)---I have not experienced anything; it is just that I heard that in some residences, Lesotho students are sometimes reminded that this is not their home, especially during the clashes in TV rooms.

(Respondent three)---Zulus do not compromise by speaking English if they are with us, even if they come to seek help from you.

Some tutors focus on the students of their own skin colour. Therefore they concentrate on those students, so much that if the tutor is white, we feel like outcasts in that class.

Assessment of activities does not cater for disadvantaged students like us (blacks). For example, during activities we are told to be as creative as possible, we are told to make black and white pictures only, but Whites, Indians and Coloreds bring ready made, colourful and expensive materials. During the presentation tutors just keep quite and give them high marks.

### **Male respondent**

I think South Africa is an angry country, because it is not long after apartheid. I have observed that there is tension between Indians and Zulus, It is like as if each and every group is saying this is our home.

I have been in social gatherings with some Zulu students; they do not compromise to speak English when they are with other people.

Some of them come from rural areas with poor background as opposed to other countries; therefore they have this inferiority complex.

There is discrimination in regard to all international students; overseas students are given first priority and choice of residences yet foreign students from African countries are not treated like that.

### **Male respondent**

Some of the things that disturb me in this institution are the student levy that we as foreign students pay (R1200.00) per year. We do not actually know what is the use of this money because we pay for our medical (R2700.00), we pay our study permits (R1500.00), and we also pay (R500.00) after you have been admitted, which is supposed to secure your place and we pay an application fee of (R200.00).

In some lecturers have students photos placed on the walls on their offices, I think this is wrong, students should use students numbers and tutors must use them also not photos because now the know which students are black or white.