



**Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of ‘white’ and ‘black’ cafes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus**

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## Declaration

I, Vuyelwa Lungile Nokwanda Dladla (Student number: 213535850), declare that:

“Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of ‘white’ and ‘black’ cafes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus” is my original work and that all the sources that were consulted and quoted have been acknowledged in the reference list.

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Date: 12 February 2023

## Acknowledgements and Dedication

“I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for” (Jeremiah 29:11).

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## Abstract

While institutionalised racism was abolished in the 1990's in South Africa, racism is still widely prevalent in our society. Although explicit forms of racism are often frowned upon today, more subtle and covert forms of racism exist and often go unnoticed. These subtle forms of racism are referred to as racial microaggressions, which, although hidden, communicate derogatory and racist ideas. There has been a wide range of research studies on racial microaggressions; however, most of these studies have been conducted with racial minorities in United States of America. Research on within-group racial microaggressions is fairly limited in the South African context, and the dynamics of minority versus majority groups are different. This study aims to explore how Black African students in a South African university perceive and experience racial microaggressions related to the racial division of spaces on campus, namely the notion of the 'white' café and 'black' café.

An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was used to capture students' perceptions and experiences through in-depth one-on-one semi-structured interviews with eleven black African students from various academic disciplines on the Howard College Campus. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using the IPA approach. Findings from this study suggest that the cafeterias serve as symbols of racial tensions among students on the campus and manifest in various ways, such as through intergroup dynamics, racial stereotypes and the general feeling of participants toward the racial division of spaces. Furthermore, data also suggests that the notion of 'white' café and 'black' café reflects South Africa's political history and the generational impact of centuries of racial oppression. Additionally, coupled with racial tensions and historical dynamics, the data further suggests that the idea of racialized spaces is associated with socioeconomic background, which speaks to issues of social class and wealth.

Keywords: Racial microaggressions, internalized racism, interpretive phenomenological analysis

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1. Brief background

South Africa has a long history of institutionalised racism that had dire effects on many people. In present-day South Africa, some people are still facing the aftermath of the Apartheid regime. While racism is no longer institutionalised, it still exists in South African communities as documented in various platforms such as news reports and social media (Durrheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011). Although overt expressions of racism are unacceptable in post-Apartheid South Africa, they remain a problem. However, while these racism expressions are explicit, more subtle forms of racism that communicate racist ideas and perceptions exist and often go unnoticed. These subtle communications are referred to as racial microaggressions. They are the focus of this study, which explores students' perceptions and understanding of racial microaggressions in context of what students refer to as the 'white' café and 'black' café on the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Howard College Campus.

These cafés are formally known as www.Café and Reatlegile Foods, respectively. It is important to note that while both cafeterias are racialized (i.e. 'white' and 'black'), students of all races purchase from both of them. This study forms part of a broader project *on Diversity and difference on campus: Perceptions, beliefs and actions*. Based on this project, several themes emerged when considering the use of microaggressions on campus. As a result of one of the preliminary research outcomes based on focus groups on campus, various themes emerged. The subject of 'white' and 'black' café came up as a powerful theme used in microaggressions within races, particularly the black African student sample. Thus, the motivation for this study is to understand how black African students make sense of the terms 'white' café and 'black' café; its function within the campus environment and a deeper understanding of what is being communicated as well as how young black students understand and make sense of these observations and experiences.

Based on these motivations, this study aims to understand various racialized statements made about the campus environment, namely the separation of spaces, particularly how the cafes on campus were experienced and discussed. It appears that different kinds of microaggressions were evident in these communications. Microaggressions are characterised as everyday intentional or unintentional slights or insults directed towards marginalized groups. These insults may be expressed verbally, nonverbally, or environmentally (Sue et al., 2007). Understanding racial microaggressions in a campus environment is useful because it

helps us understand the psychology of racism in the South African context and the social and psychological dynamics behind such acts. Although the notion of ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café is not a microaggression itself, such terms were found to be used in microaggressive episodes, in terms of how students spoke about the individuals associated with these spaces.

## **1.2. Rationale**

While obvious forms of racial discrimination have decreased in frequency and intensity, a different, more indirect form of racial discrimination still exists and is often experienced by minority groups in the American context (Wong et al., 2014). While South Africa also has a history of racism, research on racial microaggressions in the South African context is limited. As stated above, most research around this topic has been conducted in the American context, which is different from South Africa. An example of such a difference is that in South Africa, the majority groups are the ones who are marginalised; thus, it becomes a new dynamic in terms of how microaggressions manifest themselves in the South African context. Furthermore, in South African university campus settings, it is unclear whether racial microaggressions would still be important and in what way. Adding to the current knowledge of microaggressions, this study offers a different perspective and context whereby racial dynamics in terms of minority versus majority groups contrast with the American context which most studies on the phenomenon of microaggressions emerged (Lynn 2002 cited in Francis & Reygan, 2016).

## **1.3. Research objective**

The overall objective for this study is to explore how Black African students understand microaggressions related to racialized spaces on campus, namely the ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café.

## **1.4. Research questions**

To achieve the objective mentioned above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do black African students understand the terminology of ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café?

2. What microaggressions are associated with these terms and racialized spaces?
3. How do students experience and make sense of these microaggressions?

### **1.5. Chapter Outline**

The current study has five chapters; each chapter addresses a different aspect of the study:

**Chapter 1** introduces the study by highlighting the backdrop of this study, rationale, study objective, and the study's significance. This chapter also introduces the research questions that the study seeks to answer.

**Chapter 2** consists of a literature review of the phenomenon of racial microaggressions. This chapter provides a synthesis of literature from the past and present. It focuses on the definition of racial microaggression, the different types, and contributing factors to the perpetuation of racial microaggressions. The theories which inform this study are also described in this chapter.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the methodology used in conducting this study. This chapter offers a detailed account of the approaches used, sampling techniques, participants, and recruitment strategies. Data collection methods, data analysis, steps followed in maintaining the trustworthiness of data and ethical considerations are also discussed in this chapter.

**Chapter 4** presents the findings of the study obtained from the study. This chapter gives a detailed account of the themes that emerged from the data analysis process.

**Chapter 5** is concerned with the discussion and concluding arguments of the study. The concluding arguments highlight the limitations of the current study and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction

The term microaggression is traced back to 1970 as a term coined by Chester Pierce “to describe seemingly minor but damaging put-downs and indignities experienced by African Americans” (Lilienfeld, 2017, p.141). The concept of microaggressions is a term that has been commonly studied in American contexts as a phenomenon that affects racial minorities such as African Americans, Latinos, Hispanics etc. (Francis & Reygan, 2016; Wong et al., 2014). Most studies on this phenomenon are conducted in university settings where the focus has been on counselling relationships between African American clients and white counsellors (Constantine, 2007). In other cases, the research has focused on students’ perceived experiences of racial microaggressions (Shah, 2008). Microaggressions refer to implied messages that are directed to people belonging to marginalised groups. The implied messages can be verbal and/or non-verbal and have negative and derogatory connotations. Microaggressions are expressed daily in many ways, often without the perpetrator’s knowledge or awareness (Sue, 2010). Sue (2010a) argues that:

since microaggressions are intended for any marginalised group in society, gender, religion, social class, race, sexual orientation can all reflect a manifestation of microaggressions. Racial, gender and sexual orientation microaggressions are active manifestations or a reflection of our worldviews of inclusion/exclusion, superiority/inferiority, normality/abnormality, and desirability/undesirability. Microaggressions reflect the active manifestation of oppressive worldviews that create, foster, and enforce marginalisation (p. 2).

Microaggressions occur in different settings (Francis & Reygan, 2016) and take on various forms. Sue et al.’s study (2007) identified a taxonomy of microaggressions, which include microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations. The most researched are microinsults and microinvalidations, which have subthemes (Sue et al., 2007). The different forms of microaggressions differ in terms of the degree of intention and the perpetrator’s consciousness level (Sue, 2010b). Although these forms of microaggressions differ, they all have one thing in common: They communicate overt and covert messages to those at the receiving end of them (Sue, 2010b).

## 2.2. Microassaults

According to Sue et al. (2007), microassaults refer to “explicit racial derogation characterised primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behaviour, or purposeful discriminatory actions” (p.247). Lilienfeld (2017) further adds that these often happen consciously and in a direct manner. This suggests that microassaults are characterised by deliberate and derogatory verbal or non-verbal communications (Nadal, Issa, Leon, Meterko, Wideman, & Wong, 2011). Of the three different microaggressions, microassaults are the most blatant ones (Lilienfeld, 2007). They may include racial slurs such as referring to a black South African as a “*kaffir*” or treating black Africans as criminals because of their race (Mtose, 2011). The function of microassaults is to dehumanise people of different groups, with the intent to convey a message that certain groups of people are unwanted, less than human and do not belong (Sue, 2010b). Behaviours and communications that constitute microassaults are often observed in situations where there is a perceived social hierarchy in which specific individuals do not belong (Sue, 2010b).

## 2.3. Microinsults

In contrast, microinsults are unconscious and demeaning verbal and non-verbal behaviours targeted to one’s race or heritage. These are subtle behaviours, such as being treated as inferior to another race group (Wong et al., 2014). A microinsult represents “subtle snubs, frequently unknown to the perpetrator, but convey a hidden insulting message to the recipient of colour” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). A distinguishing feature of microinsults is that they are covert, unlike microassaults which are overt. Moreover, microinsults are commonly known as contemporary forms of racism and are characterised by the following subthemes as identified by Sue et al. (2007):

*Assumption of criminality on the basis of race-* This theme communicates that an individual is a criminal based on his or her race. In her study, Mtose (2011) illustrates this theme as a common occurrence in post-apartheid South Africa. In this study, one participant references how black Africans are always suspects of criminal activity and how “if you are black, you are always found to be in the wrong” (Mtose, 2011, p.329). Another common example of this subtype of microinsult is a store owner following a customer of colour around a store. Once again, what is being communicated by the shop owner’s behaviour is that the customer is dangerous, or the customer will steal something (Sue et al., 2007).

*Ascribing certain intelligence levels based on race-* This happens when intelligence is assigned to individuals based on their race (Sue et al., 2007). In instances where ascription of intelligence occurs, Sue et al. (2007) contend that individuals who are from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds such as Indians, Black Africans, Coloureds, etc. are often given a label of not being as intelligent as their white counterparts. In the American context, people of colour are viewed as usually not as brilliant as white individuals. Sue et al. (2007) further illustrate this by giving an example of what they refer to as “*You are a credit to your race*”, which essentially communicates the idea that people of colour are thought to be less intelligent than white people (Sue et al.,2007).

In South Africa and numerous other parts of the world, this has been observed for decades and continues to be the case. Black people are often viewed as intellectually inferior to white individuals. Another typical example of ascription of intelligence would be to comment to a person of a different race that they are well-spoken or articulate in a particular language, denoting an idea that ‘*for someone of a particular racial background, you speak well*’. This example is a microinsult because the message conveyed has derogatory implications.

*Treating someone as a second-class citizen,* this microinsult communicates that certain groups are superior to other groups. Those perceived as inferior are often seen as less than, less deserving, and less valued (Sue, 2010b).

*Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication-* According to Sue (2010b), the concept of microinsult refers to the belief that the dominant or white culture's values and communication practises are superior to others. This microinsult insinuates that Eurocentric values and communication styles are the norm. Thus, anything that deviates from this norm is pathologized.

#### **2.4. Microinvalidations**

Microinvalidations refer to verbal and non-verbal behaviours that disregard the lived experiences of a race group, for example, negating the fact that marginalised racial groups are victims of racism (Wong et al., 2014). Sue (2010) further adds that “microinvalidations are characterised by communications or environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of certain groups, such as people of colour” (p.8). The following subthemes characterise microinvalidations:

*Belief in the colour-blind world* – This theme is one of the most common ones in microinvalidations and occur when remarks implying a white person’s refusal to acknowledge

and recognise race are made (Sue et al., 2007). An example of this microinvalidation is when a person says statements such as “When I look at you, I do not see colour” or “There is only one race, the human race” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 276). Such statements are microinvalidations because they deny the lived experience of that particular group and invalidate their belongingness to a race or a particular culture (Sue et al., 2007).

*Feeling foreign in one’s country-* According to Sue et al. (2007), this theme conveys a message that one is a foreigner. This theme is also referred to as “Alien in own land”. An example of a microaggression that communicates or implies this communication is asking someone of different ethnicity, “Where are you really from?” In these situations, the most common message implied is that that person is not from a particular country.

*The myth of meritocracy-* This theme is argued to refer to “statements which assert that race plays a minor role in life success” (Sue et al., 2007, p.276). This microinvalidation implies that race is not an influencing factor in one’s success in life.

*Denying one’s racism –* This theme is similar to the belief of a colour-blind world, as it also involves an aspect of denial. Sue (2010b) maintains that denying racism is manifested when a number of expressions that point to the fact that a white person is denying his or her racial biases are made. Remarks such as “I cannot be racist, I have black friends” communicate that one is immune to racism because they have black friends (Sue, 2010).

## **2.5. Contributing factors to racial microaggressions**

As Tredoux, Dixon, Durrheim and Zuma (2017) indicate: “During the apartheid era, people classified as belonging to different races were rigidly separated in virtually all aspects of life, and interracial encounters were often hierarchal and instrumental” (p. 394). South Africa provides an interesting context in that groups that were previously rigidly segregated and feared each other are now in contact. While this is the case in Post- Apartheid South Africa, the remnants of the Apartheid legacy in terms of interracial contact between groups still exist in the fabric of society in everyday spaces (Tredoux et al., 2017). These remnants manifest in various ways, such as prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and racial divisions. For the purpose of this study, it will be essential to separate terms such as prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and racism, as some of them have been used interchangeably. Furthermore, these terms also differ from the notion of microaggressions described above.

### 2.5.1. Social Categorization

Social categorisation refers to the process of putting people into groups based on their characteristics. As Blaine and Brechly (2018) put it, “social categorization also involves thinking about people primarily as members of social groups rather than as individuals” (p.48), thus giving us the means to view and organise people who are different from us into different categories. Additionally, according to Blaine and Brechly (2018), the process of social categorisation is also driven by the principle of attention. Simply put, the more we observe and pay attention to people's varied qualities, such as colour, religion, weight, and so on, the more likely we are to group them together (Smith & Zarate, 1992). According to the attention principle, social categorization can emerge as a result of a distinguishable characteristic, circumstances where the category is prominent, or as a result of the category being perceived as a threat to our values. (Blaine & Brechly, 2018).

This gives rise to perceived similarity, which means that individuals who appear similar are often grouped. However, the notion of perceived similarity goes beyond categorising individuals and influences how we think about people (Blaine & Brechly, 2018). For example, in the context of this study, we might think about those who go to one café as one group, even though there are differences among them. Blaine & Brechly (2018) argue that social categorisation also gives rise to what is known as in-groups and out-groups. The former refers to an individual's membership in one or more groups while the latter refers to groups to which an individual does not belong (Turner & Oaks, 1986; Tajfel & Turner 1979). The notion of in-group and out-group membership creates an “*us versus them*” dichotomy. Blaine and Brechly (2018) further posit that “our social categorisations are not random. Some categories select themselves by virtue of their visual distinctiveness, others because of their frequent use. Categorisation also occurs when we want to define ourselves as different from people who are unfamiliar and threatening” (p. 31).

According to Blaine and Brechly (2018), the process of social categorisation serves two functions, namely to “economise our social thinking and guide our social judgements” (p.31). By the former, the authors denote that placing people into various groups or categories enables social information to be processed more easily by allowing us to group all similar individuals into one group. When we think of people in categories rather than as individuals (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012), fewer cognitive resources are needed. This enables us to meet the numerous additional demands placed on our cognitive resources (Blaine & Brechly, 2018).

Over the years, social psychology research has indicated that certain beliefs or assumptions about a particular group follow once people are placed into social categories. For example, in the context of the ‘white’ and ‘black’ café, students may hold certain beliefs about the people who go to each of these cafes. These beliefs and assumptions associated with different groups influence how we think about people from other groups (Hamilton & Sherman as cited in Blaine & Brechley, 2018). In turn, the beliefs and assumptions associated with a particular group give rise to expectations about individuals of a particular social group. Furthermore, research has shown that these beliefs and assumptions directly impact how we view people based on their group membership, which leads to stereotypes, another way we understand our social worlds (Blaine & Brechly, 2018).

### ***2.5.2. Stereotypes***

When categorising people based on group membership, we risk discarding much individual information (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). As Blaine & Brechly (2018) put it: “We recover some of this information by developing a general description, called a stereotype, of the people in a social category and associating it in memory with that category” (p. 33). In this passage, the authors highlight how the process of social categorisation gives rise to stereotypes. The term stereotype has various definitions. Allport, Clark and Pettigrew (1954) define stereotypes as a set of beliefs about members of a social group. These beliefs include personality traits, behaviours, and motives. Tajfel and Turner (1979) define stereotyping as a tendency to put people in ‘boxes’ based on opinions and exaggerated differences and similarities.

Stereotypes are often believed to be general views or beliefs about individuals who belong to certain social groups. In other words, when we categorise people, we are applying a set of assumptions that link the attributes of a particular group to members of that group (Blaine & Brechly, 2018). Applying stereotypes that represent group qualities or traits to individuals rejects the notion of individuation among people (Blaine & Brechly, 2018). Indeed, there are many beliefs and assumptions made about people who belong to different groups. However, this does not mean that all individuals who belong to the same social group are the same.

#### ***2.5.2.1. Racial Stereotypes***

According to Banton (as cited in Blaine & Brechly, 2018), race was used to identify the ancestry of people who possessed similar physical characteristics. In the 18th century, race was used as a classification system as it was for all other species. Over the centuries, however, race

has not just been used to distinguish external differences among people but has developed into an internal quality that people use to explain behavioural and character distinctions among people who appear different (Blaine & Brenchly, 2018). These changes mean how we thought about people from different racial backgrounds has changed from just being about the actual skin colour to having an evaluative component. This evaluative component primarily differentiates us from them and highlights why they are different from us (Blaine & Brenchly, 2018). Furthermore, “stereotypes allow people to position themselves as group members in contrast to other groups, to explain and justify relations between groups, and to account for themselves or group members (Durrheim et al., 2011, p.114). In South Africa, all forms of racism were abolished when the Apartheid government was replaced by democracy in the 1990s. Previously, black people in South Africa and many parts of the world experienced various derogatory stereotypes; as will be elaborated later.

While we have come a long way since colonialism and the Apartheid regime, various racial stereotypes about black people persist in our society (Durrheim et al., 2011; Mtose, 2008). Black people have been labelled in many terms such as: uncivilised, lazy, unintelligent (Blaine & Brenchly, 2018), uneducated, dirty, and incompetent (among other terms), which has created a stigma towards them. Durrheim et al. (2011) compare two South African studies that explored racial stereotypes among university students in Durban. Both these studies (Durrheim et al., 2008; van den Berghe, 1962) revealed that the stereotypes remained relatively constant in the 48 years between them (Durrheim et al., 2011). In both these studies, black people are viewed as violent, criminal, and impoverished (Durrheim et al., 2011).

In another study (Mtose, 2008), a black participant expressed that her white friends stereotyped black people by labelling them with such terms described above (lazy, unclean, etc.). The interviewee further expressed that her friends would make statements pointing to how she was a “clean, cultured” black person. In this context, what was being implied is that the interviewee was “treated as an honorary white by their white peers” (Durrheim et al. 2011, p.32). This example illustrates how this individual was treated as an exception to what her friends perceived black people to be. In connection with microaggressions, this is a typical example of one being a credit to their race by ascribing intelligence level based on race. In other words, this insinuates that *‘for someone who is black, you are clean, educated, and cultured, and thus are different from other black people’*. Durrheim et al. (2011) further argue that “although stereotypes are not often explicitly racialised, black people do encounter stereotypes in the explicit form” (p. 32).

In a study that explored racial stereotypes (Wittenbrink et al., 1997), participants strongly associated negative attributes with being black, while positive attributes were associated with being white. In another study (Hutchings & Haddock, 2008), white participants were required to look at racially unclear faces that displayed angry or happy emotions. This study revealed that the participants perceived angry emotions with black individuals rather than white (Hutchings & Haddock, 2008). Such studies “illustrate that automatic racial biases exist, reflecting deeply negative assumptions about blacks” (Blaine & Brechly, p. 110). Research also suggests that racial stereotypes can have two functions in relation to microaggressions. This is to say that microaggressions can emerge from these very stereotypes and/or serve to maintain and justify these stereotypes. Williams (2020) contends that stereotypes reinforce the impression that out-groups lack desirable attributes, which warrants continuous discriminatory treatment by members of the in-group.

### **2.5.3. Internalised racial oppression and microaggressions**

The literature on racial microaggressions has a strong focus on microaggressions between groups. There is a gap in the literature concerning another dimension of microaggressions that has not received much attention, namely within-group microaggressions (David et al., 2019). Within-group microaggressions are argued to be caused by internalised oppression or the process whereby oppressed individuals feel and behave in biased ways towards themselves and their own group (David, 2014). Within-group microaggressions are more insulting and derogatory than those perpetrated by other groups (David et al., 2019). To understand the concept of within-group microaggressions, an overview of oppression is essential. David and Derthick (2014) provide the following definition:

Oppression occurs when one group has more access to power and privilege than another group and when that power and privilege is used to maintain the status quo (i.e., domination of one group over another). Thus, oppression is both a state and a process, with the state of oppression being an unequal group access to power and privilege and the process of oppression being the ways in which inequality between groups is maintained (p.3).

From the above definition, one can infer that oppression can be linked to belonging to a particular racial group (David et al., 2019). As David and Derthick (2014) state: “Oppression, therefore, results in the differentiation of people into groups (e.g., dominant/dominated, powerful/powerless, superior/inferior, oppressor/oppressed)” (p.3).

Research on oppression has indicated that living in an oppressive society can lead to oppressed people eventually accepting and believing that they are inferior (David et al., 2019). This means that “members of socially oppressed groups may eventually internalise the oppression they face, creating yet another level in which oppression may exist and operate internalised” (David et al., 2019, p. 125).

The idea that oppression can eventually lead to internalising oppression speaks to the accumulative impact of the problem (David et al., 2019). This is to say that the more individuals are told and treated as inferior, the more likely they internalise these messages, accepting and believing them to be true (David et al., 2019; David, 2014 ; Durrheim et al., 2011). Early conceptualisations of internalised racial oppression indeed highlight that exposure to generational racism may lead individuals to internalise negative messages about their social groups and result in them acquiring feelings of animosity toward people of their own race, or other oppressed social groups (David et al., 2019).

Oppression is argued to operate on three levels, the institutional, the interpersonal and internalised (David & Derthick, 2017, David et al., 2019). These levels work together to form an unbreakable cycle that has detrimental effects on people, families and generations (David & Derthick, 2017). Each level reinforces the other to maintain the state of oppression (David et al., 2019). The interpersonal level of oppression refers to the oppression that occurs between individuals. Interpersonal oppression can manifest between groups and within groups. This level of oppression is influenced by stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination (David & Derthick, 2017). Institutional oppression, also known as systemic oppression, occurs when laws and policies that inferiorise groups of people are put in place (Jones as cited in David & Derthick, 2014). Microaggressions can also play a role on the interpersonal level, with the function of reinforcing implicit and explicit messages about oppression. This often leads to the internalisation of oppressive beliefs that are turned against the self.

#### ***2.5.3.1. Internalised microaggressions***

Internalised microaggressions have previously been termed within-group discrimination or intragroup marginalisation (David et al., 2019). These terms refer to prejudices, and contempt that exists and is perpetuated by members of the same social group (David et al., 2019). Research has shown that contemporary forms of oppression are subtle, as demonstrated through the use of microaggressions. As such, there is a high likelihood that most forms of internalised oppression are also of a subtle nature (David et al., 2019). According to David et al. (2019),

most literature on different internalised oppression types is related to microaggressions perpetrated towards the self and toward other people and groups. Microaggressions are an indicator of established systems of oppression that serve to reinforce and maintain marginalisation (Sue, 2010b). Due to their subtle and vague nature, there is often confusion of who the perpetrator is or if a microaggressive act has occurred. Sue et al (2007) refer to this process as attributional ambiguity. As a result of attributional ambiguity, individuals are more prone to attribute microaggressive acts to internal factors than external ones (David et al., 2019).

Those who are targets of microaggressions end up blaming themselves for the microaggressive act or question its validity. This often leads to the victim discounting the act and the perpetrator's actions (David & Derthick, 2014). However, although the microaggressive act is dismissed, the distressing psychological effects of microaggressions are in no way different from overt oppression and discrimination (David & Derthick, 2014). Both the former and the latter are capable of causing similarly upsetting outcomes, perhaps even more so with microaggressions because at times, there is no clear target at which the victim can direct their anger (Sue et al., 2010b). This may result in the anger being turned inwards and to those who resemble the victim of him or herself. Thus, microaggressions operate in two ways, on the one hand, they contribute to internalised oppression, and on the other hand they maintain the intergroup oppression (David & Derthick, 2014). This explanation illustrates that microaggressions that are based on internalized oppression not only create an inner state of inferiority, but they also continuously perpetuate such states through every microaggression committed.

According to David and Derthick (2014), internalized oppression can be difficult to recognise, particularly when it is subtle in nature. Subtle internalized oppression is defined as an unconscious and unintentional process that includes jokes, insults or behaviours that carry insulting, degrading, or belittling messages towards the self and/or other people who remind the oppressed individual of himself or herself (David & Derthick, 2014). Definitions of microaggressions do not explicitly suggest that those who are victims of microaggressions are from other social groups, nor do they suggest that those who are perpetrators are always members of the dominant social group (David et al, 2019). This means that anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of microaggressions, in other words, those at the receiving end of microaggressions are not always necessarily people from different groups. Similarly, perpetrators are not always from the dominant group.

This is a crucial element to understanding the complex nature of microaggressions as it illustrates that internalized oppression can manifest in a number of ways. Firstly, internalized oppression can manifest through intrapersonal microaggressions whereby oppressed individuals perpetuate microaggressions against themselves. Secondly, internalized oppression can manifest between groups, whereby oppressed individuals perpetuate microaggressions towards members of other oppressed groups. Thirdly, internalized oppression can manifest through within-group microaggressions, whereby members of the same social group perpetuate microaggressions between themselves (David et al., 2019). In conclusion: “It is when microaggressions are done by oppressed persons or groups and targeted intrapersonally and laterally (within or between) that they become internalised microaggressions” (David et al., 2019, p.130).

As mentioned earlier, microaggressions take on three different forms, microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). Thus, internalised microaggressions can also manifest as internalised microassaults, microinsults or microinvalidations (David et al., 2019). Therefore, as per the definition of the different forms of microaggressions, it would follow that internalised microassaults refer to “explicit, conscious, and purposeful verbal or nonverbal expressions by an oppressed person or group that hurt, derogate, inferiorize or exclude oneself, other people of the same group, or another oppressed group (David et al., 2019, p.131). Internalised microinsults are indirect, unconscious verbal or non-verbal communications by an oppressed individual or group that implies rude and insulting messages about the self, other people of the same social group, or another oppressed group (David et al., 2019). Lastly, internalised microinvalidations are verbal or nonverbal communications by oppressed individuals or groups that deny a person’s feelings and lived experiences. The invalidating of feelings, lived experiences, and thoughts occur at an individual level or at a group level when an individual invalidates members of the same social groups.

## **2.6. Place Identity & racialised spaces**

As Durrheim et al. (2011) have pointed out, in different contexts,

“race takes on very local, place-specific forms, and the stereotypical traits that become salient depend on where we are and what we are doing there. Places are important because they are locations for very particular kinds of relations between people that shape the kinds of stereotypes that could arise” (p. 115).

Place identity is a concept used to describe studies that examine how people ascribe meaning to places (Durrheim et al., 2011). It encompasses recollections, ideas, thoughts, and other sentiments regarding specific places (Proshansky et al., 1983). From this definition, we can infer that the meanings associated with places are held in high regard by people as they begin to identify with them and feel a sense of belonging (Durrheim et al., 2011). It has been suggested that place identity is linked to language, in that language binds people to places (Durrheim et al., 2011). Language is used to denote a variety of things, such as one's physical environment. It is used to construct and communicate meanings of places, express a sense of belonging, describe people who belong and do not (Dixon & Durrheim 2000).

Importantly, "place identity is a discursive resource for collective actions-blaming, justifying, derogating, excusing, excluding" (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p.32). Dixon and Durrheim (2000) highlight that place-identity is a social construct created through human dialogue (Durrheim et al., 2011). It encompasses how people make sense of their attachment to a particular place, and it serves "to guide their actions and projects accordingly" (p. 32). In South Africa, place identity is associated with racial belonging. As a result, the meanings attached to places are racialised and, in turn, used as a basis to determine a sense of who belongs or not (Durrheim et al., 2011).

Like gender and social class, place identity is a substructure of one's social identity and is composed of observation and interpretation regarding the environment. Identity evolves as people start to differentiate themselves from other people around them. Similarly, place identity develops as individuals learn to see themselves as distinct from, but related to, the physical environment (Qazimi 2014). In present-day South Africa, the many places we occupy had already acquired racial connotations from the past. Racial segregation exists in everyday spaces such as cafeterias, beaches and shopping centres. Segregation is maintained consciously and unconsciously by people as they go about their ordinary daily activities (Dixon, Tredoux & Clark, 2005). The origin of social exclusion and racial segregation can be traced to the establishment of place-identity (Durrheim et al., 2011), for example, townships have been historically and continue to be known as occupied by black people. Certain areas within a city are associated with other racial groups; such as Chatsworth in Durban which is mainly known as an Indian area (Durrheim et al., 2011). According to Durrheim et al. (2011):

Spaces in post-apartheid South Africa are racialised by semiotic slippages between place, class, and race. Although now legally desegregated, historically white places,

such as suburbs, universities, and schools, continue to be viewed as privileged white places. In these supposedly integrated spaces, people continue to cluster together in racial groups, and the spaces occupied by different races gradually acquire racial connotations (p.124)

A similar racialised space pattern is also observed in other places such as schools and universities, whereby specific spaces become associated with race (Durrheim et al., 2011). The observed pattern by Durrheim et al. (2011) is indeed the case in the context of this research study as we see a common feature of racialised spaces in the ‘white’ and ‘black’ cafés on the university campus.

### ***2.6.1. Microaggressions and place-identity***

Historically, black people have been associated with negative stereotypes such as being dirty, incompetent, lazy (to name a few), while in contrast, white people often receive positive attributes. Such attributes (both negative and positive) become associated with that group’s individuals and their spaces/places (Durrheim et al., 2011). This is referred to as race-place and is described as “the process by which racialised meanings of people and place reflect each other. It is a discursive process by which people and place become constructed in relation to each other in race terms” (Durrheim et al., 2011, p.122). These meanings have accumulated throughout history to the extent that they still hold even in the present day. Thus, if we know a black person (based on stereotypical views) to be unclean, uncivilised, lazy, uneducated and inferior and a white person to be clean, educated and superior, anything that is associated with both races, including the physical environment (place), will be seen with the same stereotypical lens.

If the concepts of microaggressions and place-identity are applied to this study, one can argue that it may be the case that the use of microaggressions in the context of the campus environment is a way of also managing place-identity. Following the argument that place-identity is constructed in the languages we use to attach meaning to spaces (Dixon, 2002; Durrheim et al., 2011), three crucial questions present themselves in this study: Firstly, if we consider the notion of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café, could it be the case that the cafes are used in particular ways? Secondly, given South Africa’s history of racial segregation, could it be the case that a history is repeating itself, with spaces that have previously been racialized

continuing to hold that significance? And finally, what is the function of the terms of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café. This is a particularly interesting question given that the vast majority of students on campus are black African.

## **2.7. Theoretical Framework**

This study is informed by two theories: Social Identity Theory and Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Theory. Both these theories will be used to understand students’ perceptions of the terms ‘white’ and ‘black’ café and the associated racial microaggressions. The former is helpful as it can collectively account for identity, group behaviour, and racism. The latter accounts for within-group microaggressions, which are argued to stem from internalised oppression.

### **2.7.1. Social Identity Theory**

Social Identity Theory is a social psychology theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979 to understand intergroup behaviour and the influencing factors of why and how people identify with or discriminate against a group of people. An influencing aspect of Social Identity Theory development came from the authors’ interests in social categorisation and social comparison, prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict (Hogg, 2006; Reynolds & Turner, 2001). Social identity theorists have argued that people tend to conceptualise themselves in relation to group membership (Hogg, 2006), leading to a commitment to that group status and excluding those who do not belong in the group (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Beyond focusing on how individuals define themselves according to membership of a social group, Social Identity Theory also focuses on group processes and intergroup processes (Hogg, 2006). As Hogg (2006) points out: “It embraces a number of interrelated concepts and sub-theories that focus on social-cognitive, motivational, social interactive and macrosocial facets of group life” (p. 111). Its premise is that a person’s sense of identity is dependent on the social groups to which he or she belongs (Kiecolt, Momplaisir & Hughes, 2016). The theory addresses three major concerns, which are described by three key principles. Firstly, they examine the psychological processes that describe how people’s social identities are distinct from their personal identities. Secondly, they address the differences between various ways a person can develop a positive social identity. Lastly, they highlight the fundamental aspects of social structures that govern which of these approaches will be most prevalent in any given situation (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). Social Identity Theory consists of three interlinked key concepts:

self-concept, social identification, and social comparison (Foster, 2006; Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991).

#### **2.7.1.1. Self- concept**

Foster (2006) maintains that the self-concept is a product of two factors, personal identity and social identity. The former refers to self-distinguishing traits that set apart one individual from others in a given social context (Levin, 2003). These are aspects unique to the individual and are not shared with anyone else (Hogg, 2006), such as likes and dislikes and personal characteristics (Foster, 2006). Social identity refers to those aspects of the self that relate to group membership or defined in terms of the social groups in which one belongs (Foster, 2006; Levin, 2003). In contrast to personal identity, the social identity is shared with members of the social group. Thus, social identity is defined as the part of an individual's self-concept that comes from the awareness of belonging to a social group, or groups. This knowledge is accompanied by the values and meaning associated with belonging to that group (Tajfel, 1978). Due to the value attached and the emotional significance of one's social identity, the status of an individual's social identity may serve to improve or diminish one's self-esteem within a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In social situations, different parts of the self-concept become prominent; in some situations, the personal identity is more salient. In other situations, social identity becomes salient, resulting in intergroup behaviours (Foster, 1991).

#### **2.7.1.2. Social categorisation**

Hoggs (2006) argues that members of a particular social group “identify and evaluate themselves in the same way and have the same definition of who they are, what attributes they have, and how they relate to and differ from people who are not in their group or who are in specific out-groups. Group membership is a matter of collective self-construal— ‘we’ and ‘us’ versus ‘them’ (p. 115). This points to what is commonly referred to in Social Identity Theory as in-group and out-groups. Once there are noticeable similarities and differences between different groups, the process of social categorisation begins. In this process, individuals categorise people as members of their group, which is the in-group or as members belonging to another group, which speaks to out-group membership (Levin, 2003).

Social categorisation within the ambit of Social Identity Theory is regarded “as a central and dynamic system of information processing” (Foster, 2006, p.43). During social categorisation, accentuation occurs (Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991), whereby similarities between the in-

group and differences between out-groups are exaggerated. In Social Identity Theory, social categorisations involve more than accentuation, there is also an evaluative component in which things are seen positively or negatively as well as an emotional component that involves feelings of liking or hatred (Foster, 2006). The process of accentuation and the evaluative and emotional components lead to a more striking emphasis on perceived similarities and disparities between social groups, laying the foundation for stereotypes to emerge (Foster, 2006).

#### **2.7.1.3. Social comparison**

The process of social categorisation leads to a social comparison between the in-group and out-group, creating an “us versus them” mentality (Hoggs, 2006). The comparison process is based on evaluative criteria, where individuals want to maintain a positive image of their in-group. One way to achieve a positive group image is to compare one’s in-group with an out-group that is thought to be inferior based on evaluative criteria (Levin, 2003). To enhance the self-image and reaffirm perceived difference from the out-group, an individual continually seeks out negative aspects of the out-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

According to Foster and Louw-Potgieter (1991), the evaluative dimension of group membership is established through the process of social comparison. Once groups are compared to each other, differences become magnified, this process is known as a status hierarchy. If positive characteristics are attributed to a group, it will be perceived as superior compared to a group with negative attributes. Since the self-concept is formed through social identity, the outcome of social comparison will impact the self (Foster, 1991). The comparison process opens up an opportunity for prejudiced views and out-group stereotyping (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

#### **2.7.1.4. Social Identification**

Social identification occurs when an individual develops self-esteem about being a member of a social group. Campbell (1997) argues that individuals tend to identify with a group that allows them to feel a sense of social competence or self-esteem. One can argue that the process of social identification highly depends on the extent of one’s perceived ability to fit in and belong within the in-group. This perceived ability to belong is well developed when one does not feel different but can adjust to the group’s norms, values, traditions, and behaviour (Brown, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000). Perceived sameness perpetuates favouritism towards in-group

members and which in turn, perpetuates stigmatisation of out-group members (Lurge et al., 2008). During social identification, an individual does not see the self as just an individual but also as a member of a larger group. Once the in-group status is achieved, normative aspects of group membership are prioritised (Lurge et al., 2008).

### ***2.7.2. Intergenerational Theory of Trauma***

While the Social Identity Theory helps understand intergroup relations, it does not account for what happens when members of a group cannot form a positive identity (Kiecolt et al., 2016). To address this shortfall, Williams and Mohammed (as cited in Kiecolt et al., 2016), argue that the internalised racism perspective accounts for instances where identity is relatively negative. As a result, the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Theory will be used as a framework to unpack internalised racial oppression.

The concept of intergenerational transmission is also known as transgenerational or multigenerational transmission (Kellerman, 2001). This concept refers to how a phenomenon is passed down from one generation to the next. The intergenerational transmission concept has been used to investigate several topics such as violence, parenting, trauma, and depression. For this study, the intergenerational transmission framework is used as a lens to understand internalised racial oppression. In this study, transgenerational transmission thereby refers to the process of internalised racial oppression being transferred across generations.

According to Kellerman (2001), the transmission of a phenomenon is often viewed as only occurring between parent and child; however, this is not the case. Transmission can occur from other individuals, especially in collectivist societies, where close relationships go beyond the close family unit and include extended family members, cousins, and neighbours. How trauma is transmitted is called the mechanisms of trauma transmission (Weingarten, 2004).

In South Africa, the legacy of apartheid left many black South Africans traumatised (Adonis, 2016). It is argued that an essential aspect of the past that needs attention is the long-term trauma caused by violence during the apartheid regime (Herman 1992, as cited in Adonis, 2016). Authors such as (Lumsden 1997; Bar-Tal 2003) contend that memories from past experiences of conflict and trauma are not easily forgotten. They affect those who experience the conflict and trauma and can also impact generations that follow through the process of intergenerational transmission of trauma. Adonis (2016) further argues that given South

Africa's history, it seems likely that trauma would be passed down from one generation to the next in the black community.

Williams (2012) notes the importance of understanding that the trauma itself is not internalised oppression; however, it is described as follows:

“the experience of oppression causes trauma. When this experience of oppression is internalised, and subsequent trauma is left unhealed, it can lead to the development of traits and patterns that can be characterised as the manifestation of internalised oppression, which is passed onto subsequent generations” (p.59).

In terms of the content of the transmission process or what is transmitted, this study will focus on internalised beliefs, perspectives and values that emerged as a result of racial oppression. According to Kellerman (2001), several theories explain intergenerational transmission. These theories include the psychodynamic, sociocultural, family systems, communication and biological approaches, which all have different mediums of transmission. Kellerman (2001) further mentions that to understand intergenerational transmission adequately, all these approaches should be integrated instead of explaining the phenomenon of intergenerational transmission using a single approach. Psychodynamic approaches of intergenerational transmission focus on how survivors of traumatic events transmit these experiences to their children. These experiences are unconsciously transferred from parent to child through everyday interactions (Kellerman, 2001). In turn, the children of parents who have survived traumatic events internalise their parents' traumatic experiences, as their own, as if they directly experienced the traumatic event (Kellerman, 2001, Weiss & Weiss, 2000).

Transgenerational trauma happens when an older person who is experiencing symptoms of past trauma unconsciously passes it on to a child. As a result, the child becomes a receptacle for the unwanted and difficult aspects of the previous generation. Since children are strongly influenced by elders, they project their wishes and expectations which are then absorbed by the child, who becomes driven to fulfil them. When this happens, the child is left to carry, mourn and reverse the shame and helplessness felt by the previous generations (Volkan as cited in Kellerman, 2001). According to psychodynamic theories, trauma is transferred through projective identification, in which the parent projects their own fears and anxieties onto the child, and the child absorbs this and sees it as if he or she has personally experienced it (Kellerman, 2001). Once the child has internalised their parent's trauma, they unconsciously use it as organising structures for interaction with the world (Kellerman, 2001; Weiss & Weiss,

2000). Psychodynamic perspectives note that the medium of trauma transmission are interpersonal relations, while the main transmission factor being unconscious displaced emotions (Kellerman, 2001).

Kellerman (2001) describes a second approach to the intergenerational transmission of trauma, namely, the sociocultural perspective. Sociocultural perspectives focus on how the parents as well as the sociocultural environment impact on a child. Furthermore, this perspective emphasises that children learn vicariously through observing others (Denham, 2008; Williams, 2012). Unlike the psychodynamic perspective which focuses on how parents unconsciously transfer their trauma to their children, sociocultural perspectives emphasise how parents intentionally and directly impact their children (Kellerman, 2001).

Sociocultural models of trauma transmission echo elements of Bandura's Social Learning Theory (Kellerman, 2001), which rests on the premise that a vast of human behaviour is learned through observation and modelling. This mean that through observing others, one acquires an idea of how things are done and uses these impressions to influence and guide his or her own actions (Bandura as cited in Williams, 2021). Taking this in the context of internalised oppression and the resultant transmission across generations, Williams (2012) argues that if a parent models behaviour indicative of internalised oppression, this behaviour may be transmitted to and internalised by the child. The sociocultural perspective recognises the process of socialisation as the medium of trauma transmission, while parenting and modelling are seen as the main transmitting factors (Kellerman, 2001). Authors such as Crastnopol (2015) argue that the transmission of trauma is more subtle and not necessarily traumatic. Furthermore, the author argues that subtle experiences such microaggressions cumulate over time. These are referred to as microtraumas which are subtle forms of trauma that occur overtime (Crastnopol, 2015). Due to their subtle nature, they can easily be ignored or denied (Crastnopol, 2015).

### **2.7.3. Conclusion**

This chapter explored and examined relevant literature on racial microaggressions, by focusing on the definition of microaggressions and the distinct types and subtypes that exist. Potential contributing factors to microaggressions which range from social categorization, racial stereotypes, internalized racial oppression and microaggressions as well as place-identity and racialised spaces were examined as well as their origins. The consulted literature revealed that in the South African context, when we talk about racial microaggressions, the legacy of the

Apartheid regime and the resulting racial oppression, that far precede the Apartheid era, cannot be overlooked. In addition, exposure to long periods of oppression often has long lasting generational effects on the marginalised and may result in the internalization of racial oppression. Microaggressions can also be internalized and manifest in a number of ways such as microaggressions towards the self, between groups and within groups. While most literature examine between group microaggressions, there is a scarcity of literature on within-groups microaggressions. From the reviewed literature and arguments formed, three important questions emerged which this study seeks to address.

This study is informed by two theories: Social Identity Theory and Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Theory. Taking the Social Identity Theory in the context of this study highlights group behaviour and identity. Looking at the notion of the ‘white’ versus ‘black’ cafés, it may be the case that these notions represent in-group versus out-group memberships, where individuals are categorised as belonging or not belonging based on which cafeteria they go to, thus representing an “*us versus them*” notion as described above. The intergenerational trauma perspective, on the other hand, is helpful in understanding the internalised oppression dynamic, which Social Identity Theory does not account for. Thus, in line with this study’s objectives, Social Identity Theory and Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma Theory will be used to understand these dimensions and elicit understandings from participants about the racial division of the cafes in the campus environment.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This study attempted to explore the research questions outlined in chapter one using a qualitative method from an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis perspective. A qualitative method was used because it allows the researcher to explore first-hand human action from participants in order to gain an in-depth, better understanding of the themes and categories of information that emerged from the data (Gravetter & Forzano, 2018). This chapter discusses the research design used for the study, sampling methods, data collection and steps taken to analyse and interpret the data. This chapter also discusses the ethical guidelines that were followed as well as the reliability and validity of the study.

### **3.2. Research Design**

A qualitative research design informed by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used in this study. Qualitative research designs focus on describing, understanding, and exploring social phenomena in the social and cultural context in which they occur to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied (Jackson et al., 2007). This was viewed as being the most appropriate design to gather in depth accounts of students' perceptions and experiences of racial microaggressions on campus. Furthermore, semi-structured in-depth individual interviews were gathered and analysed using IPA. Experiences across eleven participants were explored to capture their perceptions and experiences of racial microaggressions related to the 'white' and 'black' café.

#### ***3.2.1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis***

IPA has become a popular methodology in qualitative research studies. Studies that are based on IPA approaches focus on investigating how individuals make sense or meaning of their lived experiences. As Smith and Osbourne (2008) state:

The aim of interpretative phenomenological analysis is to explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants (p. 53).

IPA is underpinned by three theoretical perspectives: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). According to Smith et al. (2009), “phenomenology is a philosophical approach to the study of experience” (p. 11). This means that a phenomenological approach is interested in the experiences of the individuals being studied, it is concerned with lived experiences of the phenomena being studied as well as how those who are being studied make meaning and understand their lived experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). Furthermore, the approach is phenomenological in that it also concerns participants’ perceptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The second leg that underpins IPA is hermeneutics, which is the theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). IPA research is thus also concerned with understanding the phenomenon being studied from the participant’s perspective (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2008; Smith et al., 2009). This means that the researcher “attempts to understand what it is like to stand in the shoes of the subject (although recognising this is never completely possible) and through interpretative activity make meaning comprehensible by translating it” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p.362). This process highlights how the researcher has an active role in that he/she needs to gain access to the participants’ personal experiences and how they understand these experiences. At the same time, the researcher interprets the participants’ accounts.

This process is referred to as double hermeneutics, characterized as a twofold interpretation process of participants making sense of their experiences, followed by the researcher’s interpretation of that meaning (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) argue the importance of combining phenomenology and hermeneutics in IPA research. Furthermore, the significance of this combination is highlighted by the fact that “without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret; without the hermeneutics, the phenomenon would not be seen” (Smith et al., p. 37). IPA research also relies on ideography which is concerned with a comprehensive analysis of single cases and examines participants’ unique perspectives in their context (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

### **3.3. Sampling**

In IPA research, samples are usually in small sizes. The aim of such studies is “to say something in detail about the perceptions and understandings of this particular group rather than prematurely make more general claims” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p.55). IPA research usually

tries to make use of a homogenous sample, which is not aimed to be representative. Instead, through purposive sampling (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008), IPA research finds clearly defined participants, of whom the research questions have personal significance and relevance (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The sampling technique that was used in this study is purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique that is used “for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest” (Palinkas, Howwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015, p. 533). In addition, this technique is mainly used when identifying and selecting individuals or groups of people who know the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). For this study, there were two inclusion criteria that the participants had to meet. Firstly, participants had to be Black African; this allowed the researcher to explore the with-in group microaggression dynamic. Secondly, participants had to have been studying at the University of KwaZulu Natal’s Howard College campus for three years or more.

The main reason behind this inclusion criteria is that the researcher sought participants who have experiences in being in the campus environment and who could talk meaningfully about their experiences on campus, mainly related to the division of a ‘white’ and ‘black’ café. The participants were chosen based on their knowledge and experience of the campus environment. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of the campus for most of the 2020 academic year, students who were considered for participation in the study are those who had been registered in the university since 2018 and the years before, as per the second inclusion criterion mentioned earlier. By selecting students who registered in 2018 or before, the inclusion criterion of three years or more was met.

### **3.4. Participants and recruitment**

The researcher required students specifically from UKZN Howard College Campus. The researcher interviewed eleven participants who met the inclusion criteria on the Zoom platform and telephonically. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and as per Covid-19 university regulations on human contact research, the researcher invited participants through an online platform. The invitation to participate in the study was placed on the University of KwaZulu-Natal Notice System on 3 separate occasions. Interested students were required to contact the researcher through email to indicate their interest.

The researcher was emailed by seven students indicating their interest in participating in the

study. Once interested students contacted the researcher, the researcher contacted them via email to give them more details on the study as well as the information sheet. This was followed by the consent and biographical details forms, which were emailed to each student. Due to the poor response rate to the notices that were placed on the UKZN notice system, the researcher also posted adverts around notice boards and physically approached students on the Howard College Campus in an attempt to recruit more participants.

To minimise printing and scanning costs for the participants, the researcher created the consent and biographical forms on Microsoft Forms (Appendix C). The participants were required to fill out and submit the forms on this platform. Once each participant submitted the forms, the researcher received an automatic email notification stating that a form had been submitted. The researcher then reviewed each form to ensure that it had been filled in correctly. After obtaining informed consent, participants were contacted to arrange a suitable time for the research interview. Participants were given an option between a Zoom interview, or alternatively, a telephonic interview was conducted in the event that a participant could not access Zoom. The latter was used as an option to accommodate all participants.

*Table 1: Demographics of Participants*

<b>Name (pseudonyms)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>First year of registration with UKZN</b>	<b>Level of study</b>	<b>College</b>
Amanda	26	Female	2013	Masters	Humanities
Carol	23	Female	2014	Masters	Humanities
Lerato	29	Female	2018	Masters	Humanities
Mbali	25	Female	2014	Masters	Humanities
Njabulo	35	Male	2005	PhD	Agriculture, Engineering and Science
Pink	26	Female	2014	Masters	Humanities
Samantha	25	Female	2014	Masters	Humanities
Sandra	22	Female	2018	Honours	Humanities
Sanele	24	Male	2017	Honours	Agriculture, Engineering and Science

Sli	26	Female	2013	Honours	Agriculture, Engineering and Science
Tina	26	Female	2013	Masters	Humanities

### 3.5. Data Collection

An interview guide was used as the primary method for data collection. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the participants to extract meaning and individual experiences relating to the phenomenon of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café. The interviews lasted for 45 minutes to 60 minutes each and were conducted in both isiZulu and English. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) highlight the fact that “the primary concern of IPA research is to elicit rich, detailed, and first-hand-person accounts of experiences and phenomena under investigation. Semi-structured, in-depth, one-on-one interviews are the most popular method to achieve that” (p.365). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher and

participant to engage in a dialogue and provide flexibility for other information that may be elicited through this dialogue, which may further be probed by the researcher (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The researcher used open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses from participants. Using open-ended questions allowed the researcher to be able to ask follow up questions based on the responses the participants gave. Since the interviews were online, the researcher asked permission from each participant to record the interview using the Zoom recording option. For participants who were called telephonically, the researcher recorded the interviews by putting the cell phone used on loudspeaker and using an audio recording device to record the interviews. Following the data collection phase, the researcher transcribed all the recorded interviews verbatim into English.

To ensure the security of the data gathered through online and telephonic research interviews, the researcher took several measures. Firstly, end-to-end encryption was enabled on the Zoom platform during the interviews to protect the communication. This ensured that only the researcher and participant could access the information exchanged during the interview, without any third-party intermediary having access to the data. Additionally, the researcher saved the audio recordings on a password-protected laptop and external hard drive after the interviews were recorded.

For telephonic interviews, the researcher made sure to conduct the interviews in a private room with no third-party access, as the phone was put on loudspeaker to record the conversation. These recordings were then labelled with pseudonyms provided by each participant at the start of the interview, and saved on password-protected devices. Furthermore, the transcripts were also saved on a password-protected laptop in the form of Portable Document Format (PDF) files, with each transcript being password-protected for viewing and editing. The raw data will be stored securely and disposed of after a period of five years for data storage purposes. Overall, the researcher took careful steps to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the data gathered during the research interviews.

### **3.6. Maintaining trustworthiness of data**

Williams and Morrow (2009) believe that in any research, the researcher must justify to the research community that they have thoroughly done the research. This means that the researcher has “established a rationale for the study, a clear description of the data collection procedures and data analytic methods, and a clear description and interpretation of the data” (Williams & Morrow, 2009, p. 576). While this holds in any type of research study, whether it is qualitative or quantitative, the methods of ensuring validity or trustworthiness with the different approaches are vastly different (Williams & Morrow, 2009). As with the differences in the strategies to ensure constructs like validity or trustworthiness, the language to measure these constructs are different. In quantitative research, terminology such as validity and reliability are used. While in qualitative research, terms such as trustworthiness and credibility are the appropriate terminology (Neuwman, 2014; Williams & Morrow, 2009).

#### ***3.6.1. Credibility***

Credibility is concerned with whether the research findings are congruent with reality (Shenton, 2004). In qualitative terminology, credibility is seen as equivalent to the construct of internal validity used in quantitative research approaches (Shenton, 2004). The latter is defined as the extent to which a research study measures what it truly intends to measure (Neuwman, 2014; Shenton, 2004). As a measure of trustworthiness, credibility is of utmost importance in ensuring that data is trustworthy. In this study, credibility was maintained by ensuring that participants were honest. This was achieved by ensuring that each participant was first given the opportunity to refuse to participate in the study. Giving participants this option helps to ensure that those

who decide to participate, do so voluntarily and willingly to provide data (Shenton, 2004). Furthermore, the research questions, interview guide, and transcribed interview transcripts were all checked on a regular basis to verify that they matched the study's principal objective.

Credibility was also maintained by using what Shenton (2004) refers to as iterative questioning, which is argued to uncover deliberate lies. One such strategy used as part of iterative questioning in this study was probing, which aims to elicit rich data. The researcher used probing to refer to previously disclosed material and obtain pertinent data by rephrasing questions. Where contradictory or inaccurate information was discovered, the researcher called attention to it for the sake of transparency (Shenton, 2004) and to provide possible explanations for any differences that may have arisen.

### ***3.6.2. Dependability***

In quantitative studies, reliability is established by demonstrating that comparable research findings would be produced if the study were repeated in the same environment, using the same research methods, and with the same sample (Shenton 2004). In qualitative research terminology, dependability is seen as equivalent to reliability, which is achieved by thoroughly describing the study's processes to enable a future researcher to repeat the study or gain more data (Shenton, 2004). Having a thorough description of the processes that will be involved in carrying out the study means that the researcher provides a detailed account of the research design and how it was implemented, the process of how data was gathered, as well as a reflective appraisal of the project which is aimed at evaluating the process of inquiry used (Shenton, 2004). In this study, open-ended questions were generated prior to the data-collection phase. Although semi-structured interviews have a degree of flexibility in terms of the researcher being able to probe the participants, the developed questions were used in all the interviews to ensure uniformity in the research procedure.

### ***3.6.3. Confirmability***

In qualitative research, confirmability is viewed as the equivalent of objectivity. Confirmability is concerned with the researcher taking the necessary steps to ensure that the research findings reflect the participants' experiences and not the preferences or characteristics of the researcher. The importance of ensuring conformability is to reduce what is referred to as *investigator bias* (Shenton, 2004). Williams and Morrow (2009) refer to the fact that there must be a “balance between participant meaning and researcher interpretation” (p. 579). To achieve confirmability

and reduce investigator bias, the researcher had frequent meetings with the research supervisor during the data collection and analysis phase to ensure that participant meaning was captured rather than the researcher's interpretations.

It was crucial for this to be accomplished in this study because the researcher is also a member of the student population where the study was carried out. Furthermore, the researcher is aware of the phenomenon of 'white' and 'black' café and has her own personal experiences with it. Accompanying frequent consultations with the research supervisor, the researcher used the technique of bracketing, which was coined by phenomenological researchers (Morrow, 2005). Chan et al. (2013) describe bracketing as a "methodological device of phenomenological inquiry that requires deliberate putting aside one's own belief about the phenomenon under investigation or what one already knows about the subject prior to and throughout the phenomenological investigation" (p.1).

#### ***3.6.4. Transferability***

In qualitative research, transferability corresponds to external validity, or generalizability (Morrow, 2005). Transferability refers to how research findings can be generalized to other contexts (Morrow, 2005). Since the findings of qualitative studies are limited to a small number of settings and persons, it is impossible to show that the findings and conclusions of the study can be used in different contexts and with different people (Shenton, 2004). While qualitative research aims not to achieve generalizability in the conventional sense (Morrow, 2005), it does not mean that the aspect of transferability should be negated altogether (Shenton, 2004). For this study's purpose, transferability was increased by the detailed description of the research methodology employed, the target sample and the research setting. The purpose of this as described by Shenton (2004) is to allow the "provision of background data to establish the context of the study and a detailed description of the phenomenon in question to allow for comparisons to be made" (p. 73).

#### **3.7. Reflexivity**

As a student in the same campus under investigation, I experienced hostility from my own friends whenever I would purchase from the 'white' café. I would be told that I think I am better than them; or that I am acting white. These incidents really stuck with me, as I never understood how buying from a particular café equates to being "better" or acting a "different race". It was

thus important that I continuously examined my own background biases to ensure that I did not impose my own beliefs and experiences to the study. This was done through applying reflexivity, which is described as an active ongoing process throughout each phase of the research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexivity is viewed as a “critical reflection of how the researcher constructs knowledge from the research process” (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004 p. 275). Furthermore, reflexivity is considered as one of the ways in which qualitative researchers ensure scientific rigour and determine the trustworthiness of their work (Dodgson, 2019; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

### **3.8. Data Analysis**

Smith et al (2009) highlight that at the core of qualitative research, including IPA studies, is the analytic focus. In IPA, this is essential as it makes provisions for the researchers to direct their attention to the participants' attempts to make sense of their own experiences (Smith et al., 2009). In essence, in IPA studies the analysis is a joint account of both the participant and the researcher (Smith et al., 2009). This is to say that in as much as the focus is on the lived experiences of the participants and how they make meaning of those experiences, it is also about how the researcher or analyst makes sense of the participants' meanings, speaking to the double hermeneutic nature of IPA studies.

IPA studies follow an iterative and inductive process that is guided by various strategies that can be applied flexibly. While there is no right or wrong way to do analysis, nor does the process follow a linear path (Smith et al., 2009), novice IPA researchers are encouraged to follow a guide until such time that they gain confidence through experience with IPA studies (Smith et al, 2009). In an IPA study, the researcher must engage with the transcripts from the interviews in an interpretative manner to gain meaning and understanding of the content. These meanings are not readily transparent; they are obtained through a process of interpretation and continuing engagement with the material (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In other words, the researcher immerses himself/herself in the data collected, or as Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggests, the researcher must “try and step into the participants’ shoes as far as possible” (p.366). In analysing the data, the following six steps proposed by Smith et al. (2009) were followed:

1. *Reading and re-reading* is concerned with familiarising oneself with the data (Smith & Osborn, 2008). As such, the first step I took was reading the transcripts multiple times and listening to the audio recording several times. This step aims to help the

researcher immerse himself/herself in the data (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009) and to ensure that each participant was the focus of the analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

2. *Initial noting* is described as the initial level of analysis and focuses on the content and the language used (Smith et al., 2009). Before I could start with this step, all the transcripts were printed, with margins made on both sides of the transcripts for making exploratory notes. At this point of the analysis, “the researcher can make notes about his or her observations and reflections about the interview experience or any other thoughts and comments of potential significance” (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p.367). It is crucial that the researcher keeps an open mind as they note anything of interest in their engagement with the transcript. As such, after reading numerous transcripts, a line-by-line analysis of the claims and understandings of the participants (Smith et al., 2009) was made. This was followed by taking notes of aspects that were found to be interesting and significant.

This was firstly done by highlighting these aspects as I was reading the transcripts. After subsequent reading of the highlighted transcripts, I proceeded to make further exploratory notes on the transcripts based on my observations and reflections from the interviews and the process of listening to the audio recordings. These notes focused on different aspects and were written in three different coloured pens depending on the focus of the comments. The first set of comments were descriptive in nature and focused on the content of what each participant discussed in the interview. These comments described things that matter to the participants such as experiences, events, relationships and what these mean to each participant (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Smith et al., 2009).

Following this, linguistic comments were made which focused on features of the language each participant used in the interviews and making notes of the language that was used and the way how certain things were expressed by the participants. These comments also focused on features such as metaphors, repetitions of particular words and phrases, and the tone of each participant (Pietkiewicz & Smith 2014; Smith et al., 2009). Lastly, conceptual comments were made which allowed me to analyse each transcript in an interpretative and interrogative manner (Smith et al., 2009). Moreover, this also helped me to be able to shift my focus from the

descriptive nature of the comments to a more comprehensive understanding of each participant's point of view (Smith et al, 2009). This step of making exploratory comments allowed for more engagement and familiarity with each individual audio recording and transcript, as I had to go back to each transcript from the beginning as I was shifting the focus with each type of comment that was made.

3. *Developing emergent themes* is the third step into analysis and involved transforming notes into emergent themes (Smith & Osborn, 2008, Smith et al, 2009). This step involves working more with the notes one has made rather than the transcript itself (Smith et al., 2009; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). In transforming notes into emergent themes, the researcher's initial notes described in step two are transformed into concise phrases to capture the quality of what was found in the transcripts (Smith & Osborn, 2008). My focus during this stage was on highlighting the interrelations, connections, and patterns between the exploratory notes (Smith et al., 2009) that are described in the previous steps. Smith and Osborn (2008) indicate that, "the themes move the response to a slightly higher level of abstraction and may invoke more psychological terminology" (p. 68). Once the themes were developed, the next step began.
  
4. *Seeking relationships and clustering themes* is a step that is concerned with looking for connections between the emergent themes and clustering them together based on their conceptual similarities and descriptively labelling each cluster (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Smith et al (2009) suggest that at this level of analysis, there are no set rules as to how the analyst maps the emergent themes. Instead, there is room for creativity in how the analyst decides to map and organize how the themes fit together. In doing this, I created individual files for each of the eleven transcripts and listed all the themes that emerged from each transcript in chronological order (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborne, 2008). After this, the initial list of themes from each transcript was re-evaluated and revised, this is where themes that were similar were clustered together as one overarching theme and given a name (Smith et al., 2009). Once this was done, I proceeded to paste extracts from each transcript to the specific themes.

5. The fifth step into the analysis involved *moving to the next case*, this entails repeating steps one to four on the next transcript. To ensure that I captured the individuality of each case and followed the principles of the idiographic nature of an IPA study, it was important for me to bracket previous accounts of participants as I was moving from case to case (Smith et al., 2009).
  
6. *Looking for patterns across cases* is the final step to the six-step approach described by Smith et al. (2009). Writing up an APA study is about writing a narrative account of the study, using elicited themes. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014) suggest that “this usually involves taking the themes identified in the final table and writing them up one by one. Each of them needs to be described and exemplified with extracts from the interview(s), followed by analytic comments from the authors” (p. 369). This analysis stage also involves writing up what was found in the analysis and supporting these with extracts from the transcribed interview scripts. The purpose of this is to retain the participants’ voices and to provide perspectives from the participants, followed by an interpretative account by the researcher (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Although it was important for me to bracket ideas from previous transcripts, I was noticing that there were similarities across the transcripts. However, it was important for me to keep an open mind about possible new different issues that emerged in the data. This helped me to be able to identify points of convergence and divergence in the data, highlight the fact that while there can be similarities across the data, each account of the participants is still unique (Smith and Osborne, 2008). To achieve this, a table that captured all the themes was created, this helped to identify connections across the transcripts and identify strong themes.

### **3.9. Ethical Considerations**

To ensure that this study was ethically sound, it was reviewed by the Human Social Sciences Research Committee of UKZN, followed by a full approval for the study to be conducted.

The following ethical considerations were taken once full approval was granted:

1. Informed consent – Each participant was briefed about the study during the approaching phase; after that, an information sheet was given to each participant to give a detailed

account of the nature of the study, objectives, and what the study aimed to achieve. Participants were given the opportunity to ask further questions from the researcher to ensure they were fully informed before participating in the study. A consent form was then given to each participant, where the researcher explained its purpose and informed the participants that written consent was needed before participants were interviewed.

2. Confidentiality – As part of informed consent, the researcher provided an explanation to all participants that they had the right to privacy. Each participant was asked to fill in a form with their biographical details (excluding identifying information). All participants' privacy was maintained throughout the study, in consulting with the research supervisor and reporting of the findings of the study, all participants remained anonymous. Furthermore, during the beginning of the interviews, and for each transcribed interview, pseudonyms were used to protect participants identity and maintain confidentiality.
3. Voluntary participation- The researcher ensured that all participants participate in the study voluntarily and that they were not forced or pressured by any means to participate. The researcher explained to each participant that they were not obligated to participate in the study and that if at any stage, the participants wanted to withdraw from the study, they had the option to do so. The researcher further explained that signing the consent form was not a binding contract for participation in the study.
4. Protection of participants – Given that the nature of racism is a sensitive topic, it was important for the researcher ensure that no harm of any nature was done to the participants. Participants were made aware of the sensitivity of the topic and informed that should any distress arise from participating in the study, they would be informed about and referred to counselling services. For referral purposes to counselling services, the researcher asked permission from the Centre of Applied Psychology which is located on the campus to refer students in the event of arising distress. The researcher was granted permission to refer participants for counselling sessions should they be in distress as a result of participating in the study.

## Chapter 4: Findings of the study

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the findings of the study and the themes that emerged from the data. The purpose of this chapter is to provide insights from the participants to better understand their perceptions of the ‘white’ and ‘black’ café phenomenon on the campus. The findings from the study have been categorized into the four superordinate themes, alongside with sub-themes. The superordinate themes are: (1) Cultural identity, (2) Racial tensions on campus, (3) Historical dynamics, (4) Socioeconomic background. The table below outlines the superordinate themes that emerged, as well as sub-themes.

*Table 2: Summary of emergent super-ordinate and sub-themes*

<b>Superordinate Theme</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
Cultural Identity	Campus Culture –A common trend on campus and lack of awareness of original names of the cafes.  Type of food sold at the cafes catering to different racial groups.
Racial tensions on campus	Intergroup dynamics.  Racial stereotypes and the associated microaggressions.  Feelings about the racial division of cafes.
Historical dynamics	Political history – a repetition of the Apartheid era.  Generational impacts of racial oppression – Stereotypes internalized and passed down through generations.
Socioeconomic background	Wealth – ‘white’ café is for the rich, ‘black’ café is for the poor.  Class & Social status – ‘white’ café is upper class and ‘black’ café is lower class.

## 4.2. Cultural Identity

For some participants, the notion of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café is a common phenomenon on campus to the extent that it has become part of the campus culture. For others, this phenomenon has become like second nature, occurring naturally and accepted without questions within the campus environment. Most participants did not know the actual names of the cafes and pointed out that when they arrived on campus, the cafeterias were already referred to as ‘white’ and ‘black’ café. Other participants indicated that this culture is so pervasive that when you first hear of it, one immediately understands why the cafes are racialised

Samantha’s perception is that the notion of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café is part of campus life. She further points out that people often have their way of naming things, such as infrastructure, even though these structures might have their formal names.

*Samantha: I didn’t think much of it you know ... I feel like it’s a cultural thing, so uuuhm so like uum in places like this, like normally things would have like their specific names and what not, but uum people there will come up with like other slangs and it just continues on. So being a first year, you’d normally call a certain building aaah, maybe you normally say Gate One because you are a first year, you know coming in, you see Gate One, but then you hear everyone saying ‘main gate’. That’s just a silly example, but then it kind of like just sets and you go with that and don’t even realise why.*

It appears that Samantha’s experience of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café is captured by it being a “cultural thing”. What she seems to mean by this is that the names of the cafés have taken on symbolic meaning. Furthermore, her description of “I didn’t think much of it...it kind of just set and you go with that and don’t even realise why” provides a clear example of how social spaces can be negotiated in implicit, racist ‘non-thought’ ways. Furthermore, these ‘non-thought’ ways indicate how individuals can automatically immerse themselves into the existing culture of referring to the cafeterias as ‘white’ and ‘black’. The idea of a campus culture also appears to be supported by Mbali’s observations when she speaks about the identifying aspects of the culture.

*Mbali: By culture I just mean, it’s like when you get to ... I suppose a culture of a place that is just sort of what everybody uhm does or, it’s, you come into to it, and you also pick up on it and it just keeps going. It’s not even like a, it’s not even like a confusion or like oh what do you mean like, you know? You can meet, you can meet uhm [pause] a student, you can meet a Howard student in Pavillion [shopping centre] and say ‘black cafe’ and they know what you*

*mean. You can meet at Howard, you can meet a Howard student in Johannesburg and if you talk about ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café, they know what you are talking about, you know.*

Mbali’s experience points to the universality of this culture among Howard College Students. By this, it appears that Mbali is pointing to the idea of a group identity that can be identified anywhere in the world, which emphasises the cultural nature that is being played out on campus. Furthermore, both Samantha and Mbali’s experiences highlight how individuals automatically immerse themselves into the culture. For most participants, cultural identity was also symbolised by the different types of foods sold in both cafeterias. Participants like Sanele expressed that the food sold in the ‘white’ café accommodates white students, while the food sold in the ‘black’ café accommodates black students.

*Sanele: The ‘black’ café for example, you find things like, I will say this in Zulu, like ‘amagwinya. Amagwinya, that’s the food that we know as black people, we know it. Aah you will never find something like that in the ‘white’ café... whereas downstairs at the ‘black’ café, you know it’s “can I have a Zulu burger.” It’s common, everyone knows what it is, I don’t have to explain myself...*

Sanele’s experience highlights how he identifies with the food sold at the ‘black’ café, as this is what he is familiar with as a black African (“we know it”). Furthermore, Sanele also highlights aspects of cultural identity in that in his experience, when he refers to *amagwinya* (vetkoeks), he is understood or it is ‘known’ from within his own culture because *amagwinya* is something black people are familiar and comfortable with. In contrast, he feels that he would not be understood at the ‘white’ café and is unfamiliar with the food sold there. Sanele’s experience points to the idea that culture is also represented by the types of food sold at both cafeterias. Sanele identifies with the ‘black’ café because it is where he feels understood and comfortable as an isiZulu-speaking individual. Additionally, for one participant, not only is the food sold at the ‘black’ café perceived as being for black people but the setting of the cafeteria itself.

*Sandra: [pause] Oh, I think it is the setting, like they are not like ‘black’ café, you know as I was saying, with the snooker and everything, the wings, the type of food that is being sold there and things like that. It has much more of like a township feel. As someone who knows a township, there would be that place that just has a snooker, where all the guys would gather there and just, you know. And then on the side it has a place that maybe sells chips, whatever.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Amagwinya* refer to Vetkoeks /fat cakes, which is a fried dough often eaten with different stuffing. It is also colloquially referred to as a “Zulu Burger”.

*So I guess maybe from the whole setting of the 'black' cafe, then upstairs just jah, it's a bit more just 'bougie'.*

Sandra likens the 'black' café to a township and things one would typically see in township environments that sell food. From this extract, it is observed that there is also a sense of familiarity and comfort for Sandra regarding the township environment and how the 'black' café resembles a township in terms of the setting and the food sold. She further indicates that the 'white' café is "bougie", speaking to the idea that it does not resemble spaces commonly found in townships but is instead upper class.

### **4.3. Racial tensions on campus**

This theme came up as a powerful theme for all the participants and describes how the cafes symbolise black-on-black racial tensions among students. The racial tensions are described in various ways that highlight intergroup dynamics, racial stereotypes, and associated microaggressions about the cafeterias and the people who purchase from them. This theme also highlights how tensions manifest in participants' feelings about the notion of 'white' and 'black' café.

#### **4.3.1. Intergroup dynamics**

The racial tensions seen across participants' accounts bring about a sense of intergroup dynamics on campus. For example, Samantha indicated that for her, segregation is better and feels that "sticking to your own" is the better option:

*Samantha: ... and I think, segregation is, maybe it's better, jah like, I just like, just like kind of stick to your own in a way. Not like the unfair treatment of separate groups such as like, separate, 'cause we don't do well with each other. It's just like, it's microaggression, you are there with the people, but then it feels very uncomfortable as well, you know I feel like [clears throat] I think just sticking to your own, your own and not forcing, forcing interaction cause nobody likes the interaction, you are just pretending, because now we have to like pretend and feel like "oh no we like being with each other" and what not. We don't mind each other, I mean you know, across racial lines, but I prefer maybe being more with my, my racial group perhaps, jah.*

Samantha appears to be highlighting her social group membership and that there is a sense of comfort in "sticking with your own". She is further suggesting that segregation of groups is

better because “sticking to your own” is less likely to result in intergroup tensions and conflict. Adding on to Samantha’s experience of sticking with one’s group, some participants also pointed to the experiences of belonging versus not belonging as well as identifying with a particular space insofar as the cafes are concerned. For Carol, the sense of not belonging to the ‘white’ café is an internalised phenomenon. She describes that even though fellow students do not directly verbalize that one does not belong to the café; they behave in ways that suggest so:

*Carol: mmm ... so this thing it’s both internalised and, you see if, when it is internalized, then you just see that no these people are a certain type of people and as I am walking here, I don’t feel like you know I am being received well or rather I’m fitting in I guess. And then, well, sometimes they might look at you and be like, but, this child is not like we are used to here at the ‘white’ café, since they are A, B and C, so why would you be hanging around here? But I guess, each to their own, you see, so that’s how you feel like, I can just see it. People look at you; I look, I look at people look at people, you know. Even when I walk, I see people look at me and just think, but you wouldn’t know what they are saying, but I guess since it is probably internalized in any case, I am not dressed in a certain way, I’m not a certain way, I’m not walking in a certain way, so maybe they also see all the things I am noticing or thinking, so Jah.*

Carol’s experience of feeling like she does not belong to a particular café speaks to internalized ideals of the type of people expected to be seen at the different cafes. Thus, her not dressing in a certain way or being a certain way makes her feel like she does not belong. Carol’s experience indicates outgroup versus in-group dynamics, which for her have become internalized. Similar to Carol’s experience, Sandra also feels out of place when she is at the ‘white’ café. However, she bases this on the idea that certain people go to the ‘white’ café and further indicates that she does not identify with them, hence feeling like she does not belong.

*Sandra: You kind of feel like okay it’s a place for certain kinds of people, and when you go there and you are not that type of person, then you kind of feel out of place. Out of place, it’s like you have to be a certain type of person so that you can sit there. Groupies, there is always groupies there, so jah, just when you walk in there your general self, and you just kind of feel like nah, I just feel out of place. I think again it goes back to that uhm the kind of lifestyle that we live in the townships and whatever, there’s that feel at the ‘black’ café, it’s more like it is more for like you see, black folks relate more to this place you see, cause of the type of setting.*

Sandra’s experience indicates that there is a sense of identifying with the ‘black’ café, a sense of familiarity in that the ‘black’ café reminds her of a township setting, which she is familiar with, hence feeling out of place with the ‘white’ café. In addition, based on Amanda’s observations, when white students are purchasing from the ‘black’ café, they also receive particular looks from the black students:

*Amanda: I have witnessed that people have this thing of staring at a person who was white, they had this thing that oh they came to buy at 'black' café you see, giving the individual that look, giving them that look like what are you doing at the 'black' café when you are a white person so what are you doing at the 'black' café? It's for black people. It is kind of odd that what are you doing at the 'black' café meanwhile there is a 'white' café for you. Jah, things like that, even though they didn't tell the individual, but we saw that they had that attitude towards that person.*

Amanda's observations seem to indicate that there is tension when a white student is seen at the 'black' café because the student is perceived as not belonging in a space perceived to be designated for black students. Furthermore, Amanda is also highlighting the non-verbal aspects of microaggressions in how she describes the looks that white students receive at the 'black' café communicate that white students do not belong in the 'black' café. For other participants like Sli, the tension is not only about how students of different racial backgrounds, such as White, Indian or Coloured etc., are perceived as not belonging to the 'black' café; there is also a sense of irritation and anger when they make purchases from the 'black' café.

*Sli: You will find that there are Indians, coloureds, and other whites who go there. So, you will find that the black students also have that thing when these people come in there, like hawu, what are you doing here? What are you doing here because there is a café for you? You are coming here to overcrowd us; you are here to cause a nuisance, why don't you go to your own café? Or others, you will find that they will not tell them, like they won't say it directly to them, but you find that they will just be saying it amongst themselves because you are in the same queue, they talk. So, things like that are happening.*

An interesting dynamic is observed with Sli's perceptions that as soon as you are not a black African person, you belong to the 'white' café, irrespective of your race. Sli's perception highlights how people are categorised into different groups, with all students who are not black African being categorized as belonging to the 'white' café, while black African students are categorized as belonging to the 'black' café. For Lerato, the mere fact that there is a 'black' café meant that she belonged there as opposed to the 'white' café. She further indicates that for this reason, she has never bought at the 'white' café.

*Lerato: ... initially for me, when they say it's white and black, and obviously I look at myself, I am black, then why would I go to 'white' café, instead of supporting my black, a black entrepreneur you know? Instead of me going, yes even though maybe it is also owned by a black person I don't know, but for the fact that the other one is called black, and I felt like I belonged to the 'black' café than the 'white' café. I felt maybe jah, and you know [clears throat] looking*

*around, I would see a lot of people who looked like me. So, in a way, I felt like oh okay maybe in the, this is a 'black' café, this is where I belong instead of going up there, hence I say I never even bothered going there because I did not know what to expect.*

Lerato's experience indicates that she automatically identified with the 'black' café because she is a black African student. She felt a sense of comfort with the 'black' café because of the physical similarities of the people who use the café.

#### **4.3.2. Racial stereotypes and associated microaggressions**

Participants made associations with the 'white' and 'black' café with the former equated with prestige while the latter equated with the opposite. These associations speak to the stereotypes about both races and the spaces associated with each race. The stereotypes also feed into the microaggressions that some participants have experienced and/or witnessed in the campus environment. Some participants like Sanele recalled some of their own experiences with experiencing and witnessing microaggressions. In the extract below, Sanele describes an incident that he witnessed between two students where derogatory words were used to describe the 'black' cafe as being dirty. He further explains that although he has never personally been at the receiving end of microaggressions, he believes that he has perpetuated microaggressions towards black students who purchase from the 'white' cafe.

*Sanele: One person has said to a student that "wooooh I don't buy from the dirty-dirty" which is downstairs at the 'black' cafe obviously. Again, it is usually packed and noisy, obviously when a place is packed, it's more likely to be dirty. And I've heard a comment, it wasn't directed at me specifically, but this particular black student was walking past, and I guess her friend said let's buy here and she said, "no, I don't eat at the dirty-dirty". But it was not necessarily directed at me, and since I have never bought at the 'white' café, I don't think I've had such microaggressions directed at me, but I now, now that we have spoken about it, I believe I myself have directed such to fellow black people that I may see buying or have seen buying from the 'white' cafe.*

Sanele's experience highlights how the 'black' café is associated with negative connotations and referred to in a derogatory manner. His experience further suggests an instance of within-group microaggressions and a sense of disapproval towards black students who purchase from the 'white' café. Additionally, for Pink, the use of the terms 'white' and 'black' café and the associations made between the two spaces support negative racial stereotypes.

*Pink: It is reinforcing the stereotype. It is reinforcing the stereotype that white people are of upper class and black people are of lower class. I think it is all social learning you know? Because we are growing up in that environment and if it is not changing then we are re-enacting it or living it in other environments as well.*

Pink's perception is that the 'white' and 'black' café phenomenon is something that was learned (based on racial stereotypes) and continues to be reinforced in our everyday environments. Tina adds that the negative stereotypes apply not only to the 'black' café, but also to black people in general, furthermore, these negative associations are not just made by white people, but by black people themselves.

*Tina: ...even among us black people, we have that like mostly okay black people are like almost barbaric, you know? They are almost like, they are not as civilised or sophisticated you know as white people, hence our own café that we have, the 'black' café it's like more for the black type of you know, that kind of class if I can say, like the lower class compared to like the 'white' café you know Like we were saying in the microaggressions, it is not as overt, it is not as in your face and aggressive, but it is subtly, there is still that kind of overall theme or attitude or whatever you want to say, but whiter is better, you know?*

Tina highlights what Durrheim et al. (2011) classify as self-stigmatisation, which refers to instances where black people apply negative stereotypes to themselves or other black people. Furthermore, Tina also points out that negative stereotypes about different racial groups influence and play a role in how both these spaces are viewed, with the 'white' café being viewed positively and the 'black' café being viewed negatively. She further adds that these stereotypical views and attitudes manifest subtly, speaking to the very nature of microaggressions. For Sanele, the notion that what is associated with white people is seen as superior in comparison to what is associated with black people is not something that happens on the campus only.

*Sanele: I'm going to speak outside of campus. When we were growing up that's what we, we know, be it white schools versus black schools, so those are your model C schools versus you know your normal township schools. We all know that the model C schools, or we perceive the model C schools as being better than the township schools. Why? Because they are white owned schools, if I can put it like that way. Even though they are black schools, or private schools versus uumh you know your normal townships school. You can think of it, I think, maybe suburbs versus townships, residential areas. The so-called white areas are the better areas.*

Sanele's personal experience reflects the stereotype of one race being superior to another race. Furthermore, based on his experience, these stereotypes are held on a larger social scale that extends beyond the premises of UKZN. His experience with growing up knowing this idea also highlights that he has become accustomed to these stereotypes about one race being superior and better over the other.

#### ***4.3.3. Feelings about the racial division of cafes***

When participants recounted their experiences with the 'white' and 'black' café a range of feelings were expressed. These feelings reflect how participants felt upon hearing the terms 'white' and 'black' café for the first time and point to their feelings about the associations made with the cafes. These include feelings of frustration and anger and confusion about how this phenomenon makes them feel. For some participants, a sense of envy and hatred for the 'white' café came across, as they were describing how they felt, because white is equated to better and prestigious and black is not seen through the same lens. Furthermore, students will often aspire to the white life because of its status within society and in the university context because the 'white' café is also seen as better and more prestigious. For most participants, the notion of 'white' and 'black' café and the associations made, revolve around the feeling that anything associated with the white race is better. Carol recounted her experience when she was questioned about being in the 'black' café and shared her feelings about this incident.

*Carol: mmm I [pause] well yeah, some people, well they were asking why was I sitting at the 'black' café? And I would be like, why not? You know, why wouldn't I sit here because they also sell food like 'white' café, they sell food? You know, and I asked myself why? Why? You know, Jah things like that. They, it is mostly, they view 'black' cafe with a lesser value, lesser value you see. They never really have pinpointed an answer, but then you see why because obviously, the way 'white' café and 'black' café is, it is viewed in a certain way so, that's their answer. Jah, it was just, it made me feel inferior, it made me feel like, because when a person asks you a question like that, why why why are you asking me something like that? It's like a white person asking me did I steal or whatever, it's something like that, you know?*

In the extract above, Carol's experience illustrates a clear example of the 'black' café being equated with being a "second-class citizen" as it is perceived as less than. Furthermore, this experience made Carol feel confused, inferior and criminalized. Similarly, Sli also describes her experiences with feeling inferior due to the looks she would receive whenever she approached the 'white' café.

*Sli: Do you remember how it was in the olden days? Like it was separated, things for black people and for white people and so on. All of that, as I said earlier, it just takes me back there, that since I am getting all these looks, and everything that is happening, it actually means that there is still that thing that I am not allowed to go in there, there is still that thing that there are actually differences that are there actually. It is as if I am small, what can I say, inferior, jah and then, since they are there, they are superior, they deserve to be there, and someone who is like me doesn't deserve to be there.*

Sli's experience indicates that she not only feels inferior but also feels discriminated against by the non-verbal messages she has received from the people who purchase from the 'white' café. Her experience speaks to the idea that some microaggressions are non-verbal, as she describes that the looks she received would make her feel like she was not allowed to be in the 'white' café. Furthermore, Sli's experiences with the 'white' café serve as a reminder of the Apartheid regime with how spaces were segregated for different racial groups. Sli's experience also speaks to a historical dynamic that is being played out in the campus environment. For Sanele, a sense of sadness and hatred comes through when he describes the idea that anything associated with white is seen as good and clean, while on the other hand, anything associated with the black race is seen as not good enough and unclean.

*Sanele: It's sad because, I guess I hate the fact that everything that is better or perceived as better is associated with the white race in this context and everything that's a struggle, that's not as good, that's not as I don't know how to explain it, maybe not as clean, is associated with black people. The message is that white is better, that's the message because if you ... I think that if you took a group of white people, ten of them and you asked how many of them would be happy if they woke up black tomorrow, I am pretty sure they'd be little to no hands going up. But if you took poor people, poor black people and asked them how many of them wish they could wake up white tomorrow, I am sure you will have some hands going up because the message is that white is better. It's a better way of life; it just is, it's easier and better.*

Sanele's understanding speaks to the idea that racial stereotypes also extend to physical spaces. Furthermore, Sanele highlights that because of the negative stereotypes associated with black people, and their spaces, "whiteness" is seen as being of higher value therefore people who carry the stigma of being black (and thus seen as less than) aspire to be white. Njabulo further adds that when one is at the 'white' café, they seem Eurocentric and associated with 'being white'.

*Njabulo: Jah because I've touched on it earlier on, but it still goes down to the fact where I will say uhm you seem, it's for appearance, you seem more bougie or more Eurocentric or more*

*affiliated or can I just say 'with whiteness', if you go to this café, because it is perceived that you are getting white food and the standard of food creation etcetera, etcetera, etcetera ... and anybody that goes to the other café is, it's your township vibes you know? Mmm ... so people who aren't at the standard of sophistication and civilization, if I can put it like that, who aren't at a level of sophistication in terms of money, privilege, and prestige, so mmm.*

For Njabulo, there is a sense of envy for black students who purchase from the 'white' café in how he describes that these students do so more "for appearance" because the 'white' café is seen as sophisticated. Thus, if one purchases from the café, they will be viewed as being of a certain standard of sophistication. In contrast, the 'black' café represents a township environment, which is not equated with the high standards and sophistication of the 'white' café. Lerato shares the same sentiments as Njabulo in how she describes students who purchase from the 'white' café:

*Lerato:... maybe they say it's white because of their venue, because of their prices or because maybe you know, your trust fund babies go there ... and then the other one it's for more students that are poor. If I may put it like that [pause...], jah trust fund babies! [laughs] uhhhm...*

Lerato's tone as she shares the description of students who purchase from the 'white' café is particularly interesting as it indicates a level of envy and perhaps hostility for students who are perceived to have money to afford the prices of the food sold at the 'white' café. In contrast to "trust-fund babies", the 'black' café is described as for those who are poor. In this extract, Lerato highlights the perceived extremes of socioeconomic disparities, the poor who purchase from the 'black' café versus the rich, who purchase from the 'white' café. Other participants also shared that black students who purchase from the 'white' café are perceived as having money and thinking they are better.

*Pink: Uhm, yes, so there would be little things like you go to the 'white' café and then you hear a person saying, "oh unemali, uthenga lapho", meaning like "oh so you have money, you're buying there now". So it is already like someone just trying to invalidate you by saying oh just because you are buying there, it doesn't really mean that you have money, you know? So that's the aggression that one might experience just from buying from the 'white' café, "You think you are better, oh you don't call us when you are at 'white' cafe", you know those kinds of things. Because of like the segregation and, but it is due to class and stuff like that. When one goes to the 'white' café, this has been in my experience, and you're just chilling at the 'white' café, and then a friend of same colour or jah, same colour, is walking by and sees that you're there without them, then it is that*

*aggression now, but it's the same race aggression. I don't understand how it works. It just makes you feel embarrassed as if you just left your community because all black people are meant to be poor, yet here you are buying from the upper class, you know.*

Pink's experience with buying from the 'white' café, as a black African student, indicates that there are within-in-group tensions between black students if one purchases from the 'white' café. Pink's experience also describes group dynamics and the rules formed within the group. Although these rules are not direct and communicated, Pink describes that there is a sense of not being allowed to buy from the 'white' café if you are a black student because this café is perceived to be for white students. Thus, as a black person, one must buy from the 'black' café, and if they happen to buy from the 'white' café, they have acted against or betrayed the group. On the other hand, Sli shares how other black students look down and patronize each other when someone is perceived as not belonging to the 'white' café. Upon further inquiry, Sli also shares her feelings about her experiences:

*Sli: Like those students, I see them as being, I am not going to say racist because they are blacks who look like me. I don't know how I can put it; there is just that thing of patronizing. It really makes me feel very bad, because if you are a person and there is someone or something or someone who patronizes you, it is not nice. It is not nice for you internally; you have those questions that hawu, what did I do to this person? Or sometimes when you get there and you not even there to buy. Like at the 'white' café, there is a sitting area outside, so maybe you are just going to sit there, maybe you are waiting for someone. The people next to you, it could be black students or whites, or any other race. You find that they will move from there and go because you have now arrived, so that does not make you feel good. Obviously, you will not feel good, that hawu why are doing this to me, or treating me like this.*

Sli's experience indicates the impact of being treated as an "other" and shows an example of a non-verbal microaggression she experienced from other students at the 'white' café.

#### **4.4. Historical dynamics**

##### **4.4.1. Political history**

This theme came across in all the interviews, with all the participants pointing to the political history in South Africa and how the racial division of the cafeterias echoes the Apartheid era. In the extract below, Mbali describes historical factors that she thinks were involved in the cafes being referred to as 'white' and 'black' café.

*Mbali: ... and once again, I think it speaks to the way, like the message that it sends is pushing the same narrative of like our political history in this country. Even if you think about it on like a wider set scale, the suburbs were reserved for white people and the townships were reserved for black people as per obviously the Group Areas Act, but like we know, we know that if you are going to a certain neighbourhood, how, what you can expect to find there, and then when you are going into a certain township, what you can expect to find there and although you know maybe, you know maybe, I am even thinking in a way that is maybe now just blowing it up into like a bigger thing, but if you think about it on like a larger scale, in that way you see those dynamics are playing out in smaller uhm spaces. Like that dynamic of the suburbs, of the suburbs versus the township, you know speaking to the overcrowding, speaking to the, literally the neighbours being one on top of each other in townships. Whereas in the suburbs, everyone has like a spacious backyard with a swimming pool. Like you take that and then you downscale it a bit, and then you get something like 'white' café and 'black' café at Howard College Campus.*

Mbali highlights that what is happening on campus, with the cafes being racialised, echoes how things were during the Apartheid era in terms of spaces, including social and residential areas being racialised. Mbali's perception is that the historical dynamic plays out in various environments which are perceived to be "white spaces" and "black spaces". In addition, for one participant, the fact that many spaces continue to be segregated even though it has been many years since Apartheid was abolished shows that South Africa is still stuck in the past.

*Sandra: ... it just reflects, it is a reflection of uhm where we are still as a country. Even though so many years have passed since Apartheid, there is always segregation everywhere. In high schools, there is this sense of segregation; even now, in university there is a sense of segregation. It is just shocking that it is just out there, but nobody's doing anything about it. Like why is it called white, why is it called black ... you see?*

In the extract above, Sandra seems to be pointing to the magnitude of impact that racial segregation had in South Africa. She further highlights that the impacts of racial segregation remain unresolved, hence South Africa "still being stuck in the past". Participants like Pink also agree with the theme of segregation stemming from South Africa's history. However, she further notes that segregation was perpetuated differently during the Apartheid era compared to what she has observed on campus:

*Pink: It stems from the history of like South Africa where white people are seen as of more value than black people, or more important than black people, or richer than black people, like that theme of segregation. It happened in Apartheid and now it is also happening on the school campus. In Apartheid, they used resources and wealth and all those things to segregate. On the campus, they are using social class and stuff like that in relation to food ... where if you buy at*

*the 'white' cafe then you're seen as upper class, and then it makes you feel better about yourself. Then if you buy from 'black' cafe, then you're not important. I think it all links to history because there is that division which is due to race. So, in Apartheid it was a system of oppression where black people were oppressed, and that same system is happening with 'white' café and 'black' café where there is a race that's being seen as less than, that oppression, uhm jah.*

Pink's perception speaks to institutionalised racism during the Apartheid era. Her perception is that segregation was institutionalised during the Apartheid era, while social class is used to segregate students within the campus environment.

#### **4.4.2. Generational impacts of racial oppression and internalised microaggressions**

Some participants alluded to the generational impacts of racial oppression and how black people have internalized and accepted stereotypes and prejudices about themselves. Sanele indicates his feelings of sadness and mentions that from his observations, it is not necessarily white students who use the terms 'white' and 'black' cafe; instead it is the black students.

*Sanele: It's really sad ... it's something that we live with and is within us, even though we are different from our parents in that we have more opportunities where we can now attend the same universities as white people, and you will find that it is not the white people who are calling these different cafes that, it's us black people and unfortunately that's how we see maybe ourselves everything that is not as good, not as prestigious has to belong to us, and everything that's out there, that's amazing has to belong to them.*

Sanele's perception is that even though things have changed, in that spaces that were previously reserved for different races are now integrated; black people have internalised the negative associations that have been made about them and see them as true. Sandra also points to the idea that the fact that negative associations and stereotypes about the black race are still widely held today indicates that nothing has changed in South Africa.

*Sandra: It just shows that we are still in big trouble as a country. If the youth itself still has this type of mentality even now, so jah it shows that, it shows that as the youth, that this whole thing is still getting passed on to generations, it is still getting passed on to generations ... the whole idea of this white and black segregation is not ... not being dealt with even now. From, even though we are going to you know school and we are being taught and you know, but still, it is not really registering even now to the youth. So jah, for me it just shows that we are still not there yet, there's still work ... to be done and with just breaking this whole idea of black and white, one being better than the other.*

Sandra's perception is that if young people of today still have the mentality that white is better than black, it reflects deeply entrenched stereotypes that have been passed down from one generation to the next. On the other hand, for Njabulo, social learning also influences the idea of racialized spaces.

*Njabulo: Well, it still boils down to what society does to people because, like we are engineered as people to conform to certain, to standards as everybody, in a way that is how we interact with each other and socially. Apart from that, anything we see engineers you towards, to think along the racial lines, just for an example would be religion because most of us are Christian as black people and then, but you are told that Jesus is white [laughs] and then you go read the Bible yourself and then you are like, haibo! Everywhere I am turning there's people that the Bible writes about that are black like me, because Lamentations will tell you that they had skin as dark as coal, they had curly hair and then they were taken as slaves, Samson had dreads. So, all these phenotypes are throwing you towards black men, but society teaches you that it is a white person, so that now, there is this connotation that white is good, black is bad. So, and then, so now we have been accustomed to think like that, like white market, black market you, see? So now when they say that the quality of the food in the one cafe is bad, so 'black' café [laughs], then the other one is better, 'white' café. So, it's not just from the institution, it is a broader context within the society that we live in, in South Africa currently, so, and even in the world basically, jah.*

Njabulo's perception is that through social learning, the positive and negative connotations about the white race and black race feeds into how people view things based on racial lines. His example about religion points to how social learning changes one's perception about people and things, where being white represents or is equated with goodness and high standards. In contrast, being black is associated with the opposite. Furthermore, Njabulo's perception is that this is a global phenomenon. For Tina, the internalised stereotypes about black people are not only passed down from one generation to the next but it is also influenced by media, politics and general society:

*Tina: So, it is saddening because ... it's not just the university, it is kind of just the small screenshot or a small-medium that you can see, it's fed by the media. It is fed by politics, it is fed by so many different, what's the word, forums or different aspects of, you know, daily living that the university is just showing us a result of what these different avenues have shown us, that okay black is less, white is better. I feel like that constant you know being told that you are less than, you're less than, it actually became internalized and ingrained in us, and if you question it, it's almost like okay, calm down you know, because it is a generational, it is a*

*5generational thing and it's from multiple like fronts you know, in the media, in the workplace, in you know the school system, you see we heard a few years ago, the case of Zulaikha, because of her you know black hair she was seen as she must be expelled, you know. The blackness is just constantly being attacked and it is a sad thing, it's a sad thing.*

Tina's perception reflects a sense of deep sadness about the racial stereotypes that are influenced by many factors that support the ideologies of white superiority. Her perceptions also highlight that the notion of racialized spaces and the associated stereotypes on campus are a reflection of society at large. Tina's perception also indicates that prolonged exposure to oppression leads to internalized stereotypes that are carried over across generations. Finally, she makes an interesting association between seeing these struggles as 'generational' hand-me-downs that come from many sources contributing to deep sense of overwhelm ("it is a generational thing ... calm down you know").

#### **4.5. Socioeconomic background**

This was a strong theme across most of the interviews and highlighted that the notion of a 'white' and 'black' café is not only a racial issue but also a socioeconomic one. Based on the participants' experience, this theme encompasses aspects of social class, wealth and status. Samantha relates her experiences by describing that the 'white' café is given status within the campus environment and goes on to describe her perception of the kinds of people who are typically associated with the 'white' café in particular:

*Samantha: Like 'white' cafe, to be honest I think the whole thing, you know and people and my friends like giving it that kind of status ... that 'white' café. I always just felt awkward to even walk past there because it felt like I didn't fit in. So jah, the time that I did it was like a, you know, like lardy dardy kind of thing. Like I drive to campus and I stop for coffee, I don't get off a taxi, I don't get dropped off by a parent kind of thing uuuhm situation. So jah, I feel like it is more of, maybe like economic, what am I trying to say? Like well-off kind of students at the upper, at the 'white' café.*

Samantha's experience highlights aspects of social categorisation in that people are placed into groups based on their characteristics. In the extract above, Samantha's description also highlights that people who are perceived as being of upper class or "lardy dardy" and well-off students are perceived to belong to the 'white' café. In addition to the type of people categorised as belonging to each of the cafes, Pink elaborates on the status given to the 'white' café.

*Pink: How I understood it upon arrival was that there was one café that was a status that showed that you're upper class, and then there was another café that showed a status of you*

*being lower class, and then in both of those environments, you were treated as such.*

Pink's perception and experience highlight the stark differences between the classes that each cafeteria is associated with. Furthermore, her experience illustrates the comparisons between the two cafeterias. This speaks to the processes of intergroup dynamics, whereby based on characteristics, individuals are categorised into different groups; once these groups have formed, they are often compared. Additionally, Carol emphasises that the sense of being "upper class" is also evaluated by how one looks and behaves.

*Carol: We gotta look a certain way, sit this way, ACT a certain way, so jah. You'd be more poised, you'd be more, you act a little more sophisticated, a little more glamorous, just bougie I guess, you know just acting I don't know, just like that, poised, you are composed, you know you are a certain type of person. You walk a certain way, you TALK a certain way, so yeah, you EAT a certain way, you know?*

Carol's experience with the 'white' café is that one needs to be and conduct themselves in a certain way to be deemed to belong to the 'white' café. Carol's experience illustrates the processes that occur once social categorisation has formed, and group membership has occurred. Her emphasis on her experience is a typical example of how once groups have been formed, there are certain norms and rules for that group, such as dressing or acting in a certain way to indicate that one belongs to the 'white' café. Furthermore, this also speaks to the evaluative component of the group, meaning that if one deviates from the norms of the group, they are seen as not belonging. To illustrate the perceived differences between the two cafes, Samantha provides her experiences with one of her lectures:

*Samantha: You know it's, I think, okay because like people started stating that the upper café or 'white' cafe has status, and I remember once. I can't remember which, I think maybe second year [pause] jah, must have been in second year. I can't remember the lecturer or what the lecture was about, but then a student gave an example and said that you know like 'black' café and 'white' café are uMhlanga and Umlazi, so they called the bottom cafe uMlazi and then they called the other cafe uMhlanga. So, the time I walked over there I was like looking at all these posh lardy dardy kind of people sitting there with their coffees and lunches and I'm just looking like a hobbo [laughs] walking by [laughs]. So, I felt really awkward [laughs]. I tried to walk like I'm being invisible, jah. So, I think that was the last, last time, and I just take the longer way than walk past that area.*

Samantha's analogy of the 'white' café being likened to <sup>2</sup>uMhlanga and the 'black' café being associated with <sup>3</sup>uMlazi clearly depicts how people perceive these spaces. Her perception speaks to the comparative dimension that occurs in social groups and how these comparisons do not only apply to people but the physical spaces associated with those people. In addition, Samantha's experience of being around the 'white' café and how she describes that she looked like a "hobbo" further speaks to idea that she did not fit with the norm of the 'white' café in terms of how she was dressed and thus feeling like an "other". Furthermore, Samantha's experiences with the 'white' café and not fitting in were so unbearable to her, to such an extent that she had to avoid the 'white' café. Tina uses a different analogy to share her perceptions of the 'white' and 'black' café.

*Tina: At the 'white' café, it's expensive, but you know it is almost like comparing Boxer and Woolworths, it's almost like that. Boxer is more for affordability, and you know for black people, you don't see white people going to Boxer. Woolworths is more for, you know the white people who will go for organic and, they go for, instead of normal milk they go for oat milk, you see? Things like that, vegan, you know what I mean? Like that kind of difference, the gap, the economy gap, basically. It's very vivid in the university's 'black' and 'white' cafe.*

While Tina's perception and analogy are very similar to Samantha's in terms of class differences, her perception also speaks to the idea of expensive things (and spaces in this context) being associated with white people and what is seen as cheap and affordable being associated with black people. One participant shared a different experience about the cafeterias: it is not only about the norms of the groups but also about how one would experience different feelings depending on the cafeteria they went to.

*Pink: So, in the 'white' café, which is upstairs by the library, you were treated as if you were important, and you had to also dress accordingly... So, this brought feelings of being important and then because you were in a 'white' café, and how everyone was interacting in the 'white' café, it validated those feelings of you are of importance. Whereas in the 'black' café, which was at the bottom, next to the library. Even that, one is on top, the other is at the bottom, which is, you know validates how one is higher up and then the other is of low value. In the 'black' café one was made to feel like you are of a lower class, and it was validated because of also another thing, it was validated also because of the*

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<sup>2</sup> uMhlanga is an up-market residential and commercial suburb located on the North Coast of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. It forms part of the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.

<sup>3</sup> uMlazi is a township located on the South-West of eThekweni in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

*food that was sold at the 'black' café, like it was, you could see it was more affordable, because it is catering to lower class.*

Pink's experiences highlight group experiences. She highlights how groups that develop a positive social image will directly have an influence on one's social identity and esteem; the more positive the social image is, the more likely members of that group will have a positive self-image in relation to the group they belong. In other words, based on Pink's experience, 'white' café seems to have a positive image; hence one feels like they are "important". In contrast, 'black' café does not have a positive image and is associated with less value. Therefore, individuals in this group might have a negative self-image based on their group's negative social status and image. Additionally, Tina highlights the internal complexities that emerge when purchasing from the 'white' café:

*Tina: I almost never want to ... If I were to buy a whole meal from the 'black' cafe, I almost feel like "hey you have downgraded", you know?" Like hey times are tough for real or hey you are now putting yourself in that class, as opposed to if I buy from the 'white' café, I would feel like, no I am still okay, I'm still, you know, in that standard or level. I am still a little bit sophisticated, you know? So I feel like as opposed to it being from outside of people or external, I feel like it has been more like internal, like I said before. Like you feel that yourself, you know? I don't know if that feeling is from my own situation or is it actually an indication of the culture of that environment that makes everyone feel the same way.*

Tina's experience with how she feels she has "downgraded" when she buys from the 'black' café indicates her perception of 'black' café's poor social image. This appears to also influence her individual sense of self or self-image as it appears that she does not want to be associated with the 'black' café. Tina points to how this is all an internal experience for her, speaking to the idea that one's group status and social identity influence one's self-esteem. In other words, when the social identity is positive, it will likely result in positive self-esteem and vice versa. Not only is Tina's experience highlighting the impact of social identity on one's self-esteem, but it also appears to indicate a self-perpetuated microaggression. Tina's experiences also appear to be indicative of an internal microaggression, where subtle discrimination arises due to her own biases against her group (David et al., 2019). Furthermore, this appears to result in a state of confusion and portrays a sense of internal conflict and tension.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The main objective of this study was to explore how Black African students understand microaggressions related to racialized spaces on the Howard College Campus at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The findings of the study presented in chapter four reveal multiple influencing factors to students' perceptions and understandings of the notion of 'white' and 'black' café. Students shared similar perceptions in most aspects of the identified themes highlighted in chapter four. This chapter will discuss the themes that emerged from the data in the context of the literature review discussed in chapter two. Additionally, this study draws on two theories, the Social Identity Theory and the Transmission of Intergenerational Trauma Theory.

### **5.2. Cultural Identity**

Cultural identity was a common theme among the participants of this study. This theme highlights how the terms 'white' café and 'black' café have become part of the everyday language used in the campus. Many of the participants further indicated how both these terms have become normalized to such an extent that students do not have any knowledge of the original and/or actual names of both the cafeterias. In addition, participants indicated that they have used and continue to use these terms without "thinking much about it" or "not realising why". Participants also indicated how cultural identity is represented by cuisine served on both cafeterias noting that the food sold at each cafeteria is perceived as "white people food" and "black people food" respectively.

### **5.3. Racial tensions on campus**

Racial tensions on the campus came up as a dominant theme in this study, pointing to the idea that the cafes serve as symbols of racial tension between and within groups. In addition, the findings of the study indicated that racial tensions and attitudes are not about racialized spaces only but also about people belonging to the respective races, in this context, white and black people. Anderson (2015) points out that although many years have passed since the days of the Civil Rights Movement in America, segregation still exists. Furthermore, many spaces, such as residential areas, schools, universities, and restaurants, are still seen as white, especially in

areas where black people are usually absent or not expected. As a result, black people often refer to these areas as “white spaces” (Anderson, 2015).

Similar trends are seen in the South African context, in that during the Apartheid era, public spaces were segregated for different racial groups under The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act 49 of 1953, which aimed to limit contact between different racial groups (South African History Archives, 2012). While it has been 28 years since Apartheid was abolished, many spaces that were once “white spaces” continue to be perceived as such. This is indisputably the case with schools, residential areas, universities, shopping areas and many other public spaces. Durrheim et al. (2011) argue that public spaces were racially divided and arranged in a hierarchical system, where the best facilities were reserved for white people. On the other hand, however, other races were subjected to facilities of poor quality and standards (South African History Archives, 2012). A typical example of this hierarchal arrangement of people is that during the Apartheid era, white people occupied spaces (e.g. residential areas, schools etc.) with higher value. Indian and Coloured people, on the other hand, were placed in the middle, occupying intermediate spaces, while black people were occupying townships that were mostly poverty-stricken and lacked basic facilities.

In this study, many participants pointed to the idea of the ‘white’ café being predominately occupied by white students while black students dominate the ‘black’ café. Furthermore, participants also indicated the differences in terms of the infrastructure itself, highlighting that the ‘white’ café is attractive, clean and has resources such as air conditioning; as such is perceived as a “white space”. On the other hand, the ‘black’ café is dirty, not as appealing, and perceived as a “black space”. Notably, some participants shared that Indian and Coloured students were perceived as belonging to the white race because they did not speak an African language. Thus, according to some participants, if one speaks English and is not Black African, they are automatically classified as white.

These findings are supported by one of the premises of Social Identity Theory; once there are differences among a group of people, they are categorized as belonging to a particular group. In other words, irrespective of race, English speakers are all classified or categorised as belonging to the ‘white’ café based on their similarity in terms of the language they speak and the fact that they are not black Africans. Social Identity Theory proposes that social categorisation is a dynamic information-processing process which operates on the accentuation principle (Foster, 2006; Stets & Burke, 2000). In the study, for instance, group similarities and

differences between those who purchase from the two cafes appeared in various ways. For example, the group similarities of those who buy from the ‘black’ café illustrate physical, linguistic and socioeconomic similarities. However, the differences between those who purchase from the ‘white’ café are completely in contrast to those of the ‘black’ café. Participants gave a few examples of the stark differences between the cafeterias. Those who purchase from the ‘white’ café are categorized together based on their physical appearance, spoken language, and socioeconomic background.

While both cafeterias were compared using the same identifying and distinguishing factors (i.e. physical appearance, language and socioeconomic background), both perceived similarities and differences between the cafeterias themselves and the people who purchase from them are polarised. Based on the accentuation principle, similarities and differences between both spaces seem exaggerated. In addition to the process of accentuation that occurs during information processing, Social Identity Theory postulates that social groupings contain an evaluative and an emotional component (Foster, 2006). These components influence how social groups are viewed positively or negatively (Foster, 2006; Stets & Burke, 2000, Tajfel & Turner 1979). The social comparison process leads to the selective application of the accentuation effect, mostly to those dimensions that will lead to self-enhancing outcomes for the self. For example, judging the in-group and the out-group on dimensions that lead to the former being judged positively and the latter being judged negatively (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Based on the findings of this study, it can be argued that participants who identify with the ‘black’ café may represent the in-group, while those who purchase from the ‘white’ café are seen as the outgroup. This is reflected in how participants shared their experiences of being angry when different races purchase from the ‘black’ café’ or how betrayed they feel when black students purchase from the ‘white’ café. These dynamics speak to group norms that are formed once there is a sense of group identity. Moreover, these feelings of anger and betrayal of the group bring out themes of unresolved power and oppression, which are repeated in different ways.

#### **5.4. Historical dynamics**

The historical dynamics of racial oppression and the legacy of the Apartheid regime were indicated as having a strong influence on how marginalized groups view themselves in a negative light. These views were also identified as being carried over from one generation to

the next, thus becoming a repetition of history. All participants angrily indicated that the fact that social spaces on the campus are racialized speaks to how South Africa is still stuck in the past.

Hirschberger (2018) speaks of collective trauma and defines it as “the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; it does not merely reflect a historical fact, the recollection of a terrible event that happened to a group of people” (Hirschberger, 2018, p.1). In other words, collective trauma implies that the traumatic event is reflected in the group’s collective memory, which, like all kinds of memory, includes not only a replication of the traumatic events but also a continuing reconstruction of the trauma to make meaning of it (Hirschberger, 2018). A distinction is made between collective memory of trauma versus individual memory of trauma. The former affects more than just the people who physically and directly experienced the trauma but is also recalled by those who were not first-hand survivors of the trauma. Additionally, the subsequent generations of trauma survivors, who did not directly encounter or witness the traumatic events, may recall these events differently than first-hand survivors. These recollections of past events may then be socially constructed in different ways and passed down from one generation to the next (Bar-Tal, 2003; Lumsden, 1997; Hirschberger, 2018).

The data analysis of this study and this theme, in particular, illustrate how meaning is constructed based on collective memory. For example, some participants shared that they would hear stories from their grandparents and parents about the Apartheid regime and the traumas that came along with it. In relation to the racialized spaces on campus; the meanings constructed by the participants highlight how they feel like the idea of a ‘white’ café and a ‘black’ café is a repetition of the Apartheid legacy. However, most participants were not first-hand survivors or witnesses of the Apartheid regime. In their experience however, the mere fact that there are still racialised spaces in post-Apartheid South Africa took them back to the past. This, according to Hirschberger (2018), implies that the function of collective trauma is that the memories are kept alive and cause future generations to absorb the trauma into their collective selves (Kellerman, 2001, Weiss & Weiss).

According to Hirschberger (2018), collective memories serve the fundamental purpose of maintaining social identity. From a social psychology perspective, collective memories not only serve the purpose of maintaining social identity but also maintaining a positive collective identity as well as worth (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). A positive social identity and a sense of value are influenced by comparisons made between groups, the devaluation of other groups and the

reconstructing of reality in order to maintain a positive image (Hirschbecker, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The data and analysis in this study illustrate the assumptions of the Social Identity Theory in that comparisons are made between the ‘white’ café’ and the ‘black’ and the people who purchase from each café. The findings of the study also indicate that those who associate and identify with the ‘black’ café are often perceived negatively, thus resulting in the sense of a poor social identity.

Collective trauma, such as prolonged exposure to racial oppression, can result in social groups questioning their value or worth, thus potentially resulting in a negative social identity. However, authors such as Gillies and Neimeyer (2006) oppose this view, arguing that collective trauma does not necessarily negatively impact group identity. Instead, through shared memories and the construction of reality, the group may find unifying aspects of the collective trauma, in which the trauma is integral to their narrative and identity. The findings in this study, however, paint a dual picture as it appears that those who identify with the ‘black’ café have negative perceptions of the café itself and themselves, yet at the same time, some participants strongly identify with the ‘black’ café through shared narratives and experiences of racial oppression. Once more, this illustrates intergroup dynamics considering the fact that people are categorized as belonging to certain groups (i.e. the ‘black’ café or the ‘white’ café), which leads to comparisons between the groups, often followed by particular perceptions (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

While the participants who perceive themselves as belonging to and identifying with the ‘black’ café are unified in their shared experiences and narratives of being historically marginalized, they also appear to have a negative view of the café itself and themselves. A shortfall of the Social Identity Theory is that it does not consider what happens when groups do not form a positive identity (Kiecolt, Momplaisir & Hughes, 2016). Research on racial oppression suggests that “in order to maintain a system of racial oppression, it is necessary to have a psychological element that is self-perpetuating and internalized by the oppressed group” (Bailey, Williams & Favors, 2013, pg. 137). Moreover, internalised oppression is defined as the process of internalising and accepting the oppressive actions and beliefs of the dominant white culture toward black people, such as negative stereotypes, discrimination, and racist ideologies (Bailey, Chung, Williams, Sigh & Terrel 2011; David and Derthick 2014).

By internalizing racial oppression, the marginalized group imposes it on themselves, negating the need for the dominant white culture to maintain the status quo of racial oppression (Bailey

et al, 2011; Bailey et al., 2013). The sense of internalized racism was evident in this study's findings as some participants compared the 'black' café and the people who purchase from it as uncivilized and "barbaric", dirty and unsophisticated, inferior and of low value. Most of the perceptions about the 'black' café reflected derogatory comments and microaggressions, illustrating that the 'black' café is of second-class or lower-class when compared to the 'white' café. In addition, the findings also demonstrated racial stereotypes that have also been internalized. Durrheim et al. (2011) refer to this as an example of self-stigmatisation, which occurs when black people impose racist stereotypes on themselves and look at themselves through "white eyes".

Furthermore, when participants recalled their experiences of being at the 'white' café, they reported feeling out of place and a sense of not being "good-enough" to be at the 'white' café which is perceived to be better and superior to the 'black' café. Thus, for some participants, there was a sense of being insignificant and undervalued (Durrheim et al., 2011). The sense of self-stigmatisation and internalized racism is also implicit in how participants made negative associations about the 'black' café and positive associations with the 'white' café. Literature on internalized racial oppression suggests that cumulative experiences and exposure to racial oppression have dire psychological impacts on individuals that span across generations (Bailey et al, 2013; Durrheim et al, 2011). Examples of the psychological impacts of cumulative exposure to racial oppression include people having an inferiority complex and low self-esteem (Durrheim et al., 2011), which some participants who identify with the 'black' café alluded to.

### **5.5. Socioeconomic background**

Perceived differences between the cafeterias also highlighted socioeconomic dynamics such as wealth, class and social status. These dynamics highlighted perceived differences between the cafeterias and the people associated with each. The 'black' café was perceived to be of low class and social status, while the 'white' café on the other hand was perceived to be of higher class, prestige and social status. The findings suggest that the classification of people is racially motivated and includes one's socioeconomic background. Participants indicated that "certain people" go to each of the cafes, with the 'black' café being of a lower standard and associated with those who come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. In contrast, the 'white' café was associated with higher standards and perceived to be associated with people from well-off families and those who think they are superior.

Perceived socioeconomic differences manifest in the descriptions of the spaces themselves, the type of people who purchase from the cafes, physical appearance, and behaviours. Associations were made with the cafeterias in which the ‘black’ café was compared to townships, with the ‘white’ café being compared to suburban areas. Participants shared that to be associated with the latter; one must meet a certain standard of physical appearance and behave sophisticatedly. This is an illustration of how racial identities can intersect with class identity. In the context of this study, it appears that the cafeterias are not only about racialized spaces, but also class differences between those who purchase from each of them. Furthermore, this illustration raises the importance of recognising the similarities between both racial and class microaggressions in that they are founded on assumptions and biases that associate black African people and those of lower socioeconomic standing with inferiority (Sue et al., 2008).

Research has shown that racial microaggressions that convey assumptions of inferiority are correlated to increased psychological distress (Nadal et al., 2014). Class microaggressions on the other hand often lead to feelings of exclusion (Smith & Deshpande, 2016). While there seems to be an intersection between race and class microaggressions, current literature on microaggressions lack an emphasis on the interaction of racism and classism (Lewis, Williams, Moody, Peppers & Gadson, 2018). Due to the lack of this literature, Lewis et al. (2018) further suggest that if research focuses more on this interaction, “microaggression researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how social class and race interact as systems of oppression that influence marginalized populations in their daily lives” (p. 54).

## **5.6. How black African students understand the terminology of ‘white’ and ‘black’ café**

Based on the findings of the study, most participants highlighted that their understanding of ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café is a form of racism and segregation as well as an issue of class and a repetition of Apartheid history. Moreover, although students from various racial backgrounds use both the cafes, participants perceived that the ‘white’ café is designated for white students while the ‘black’ café being designated for black African students. This perception is also illustrated by how some participants felt a sense of anger when white students purchase from the ‘black’ café as it is perceived as a space that does not belong to the white student population. In addition, some participants highlighted cultural differences between both

cafeterias as well as differences between those that purchase from each cafeteria. The differences highlighted by the participants had derogatory implications for black Africans who purchase from the ‘white’ café and for the ‘black’ café and its patrons. These derogatory implications were observed between black African students, which highlights how within-group microaggressions also known as within group discrimination (David et al., 2019), are used in relation to racialized spaces in the campus environment. Furthermore, analysis of the findings indicates that derogatory commentary about the spaces and the people who purchase from them are covert and not explicit as traditional racism. These covert forms of racial discrimination have been named ‘racial microaggressions’ and are described as:

brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults that potentially have harmful or unpleasant psychological impact on the target person or group (Sue et al., 2006, as cited in Sue, 2009, p. 72).

Statements such as the ‘black’ café being “the dirty, dirty” or the people who purchase from the ‘black’ café being labelled as “uncivilized” and “unsophisticated” reflect deeply held stereotypes. The analysis of the findings also highlights the adverse psychological effects that microaggressions and racialized stereotypes can have on those who are on the receiving end of microaggressive acts.

### **5.7. Microaggressions associated with the terms ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café**

A number of microaggressions emerged from the data of the study. Sue et al. (2007) developed a taxonomy of nine racial microaggressions as outlined below:

*a) assumptions that a person of color is not a true American, (b) assumptions of lesser intelligence, (c) statements that convey color blindness or denial of the importance of race, (d) assumptions of criminality or dangerousness, (e) denials of individual racism, (f) promotion of the myth of meritocracy, (g) assumptions that one’s cultural background and communication styles are pathological, (h) being treated as a second-class citizen, and (i) having to endure environmental messages of being unwelcome or devalued (Williams, Skinta & Martin-Willet, 2021, p.993).*

Based on this study, participants' perceptions of the 'white' and 'black' café highlighted a number of categories of microaggressions that were directly experienced and/or witnessed by the participants. Research suggests that the abovementioned taxonomy has been revised and expanded since Sue et al.'s (2007) original taxonomy (Williams, 2020; Williams et al., 2021). Furthermore, Williams et al.'s (2021) revision expanded the taxonomy to sixteen categories, some of which were present in participants' experiences with the 'white' and 'black' café. A salient category that emerged from the data was "racial categorization and sameness" (Williams et al., 2021, p. 997). This category describes situations where individuals are pressured or forced to reveal their racial group to others, which frequently results in the manifestation of pathological stereotypes based on that identity (Williams, 2020; Williams et al., 2021). While participants were not explicitly compelled to reveal their racial group identity, all of them identified as black Africans and pointed to vast stereotypes about black people and the spaces they occupy (Durrheim et al. 2011).

These racial stereotypes are not only perpetuated on the campus environment, but also on a broader social scale. Williams (2019) further adds that in the United States, school campuses have long been acknowledged as places where racial tensions on a macro-level are amplified. Findings from this study also revealed that black African students who purchase from the 'black' café are mostly seen as similar or categorised into a "one-size-fits all box" based on perceived similarities in socioeconomic factors, behaviours ("black café is barbaric"). In other words, despite individual differences among those who purchase from the 'black' café, it appears that they are categorised as the same. Similarly, black African students who purchase from the 'white' café were perceived as being of higher socioeconomic standing, "bougie" or thinking that they are better or "acting a white".

While patrons of each café were fitted into a one-size-fits all box, those who purchase from the 'black' café were on the receiving end of racial stereotypes and microaggressions. These examples further highlight the within-group microaggressions and tensions between black African students in relation to these racialized spaces. David et al (2019) hypothesize that within-group microaggressions are a result of internalized oppression or processes where interpersonal and institutional racist ideologies infiltrate marginalized individuals to such an extent that they apply the same biases to themselves and others of the same group. Another type of microaggression that stood out from the participants' accounts is that of being a second class-citizen. This type of microaggression was more apparent in how the 'black' café was described in a derogatory manner, seen as inferior and not good enough. Additionally, these

comments were not only about the cafeteria itself, but also about the people who purchase from the ‘black’ café. In other words, patrons from the ‘black’ café were perceived as being inferior, not good enough, and not of a sophisticated standard. For some participants, these perceptions were also internalized, meaning that they perceived themselves as such.

Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication (Sue, 2010b) was also found in the data. Williams (2021) suggests that “this microaggression occurs when people of colour are criticized because of real or perceived cultural differences in appearance, traditions, behaviours or preferences” (Williams, 2021, p.1001). Moreover, this type of microaggression also insinuates that Eurocentric cultures/norms are the preferred standard while non-Eurocentric ideals are seen in a negative light often resulting in the assimilation to the dominant culture as the ideal standard (Sue et al., 2007; Williams, 2021).

Findings in the study also highlighted pathologizing cultural values/communication as some participants shared how there is an aspiration to the “white life” (and thus ‘white’ café) due to the negative connotations and stereotypes attached to the ‘black’ café. Moreover, this microaggression was also highlighted in how some participants shared their experiences of how they have to “dress accordingly”, “act in sophisticated and poised manner” when they are at the ‘white’ café in order to fit into the perceived high social class of the ‘white’ café.

### **5.8. Students’ experiences and understanding of the associated microaggressions**

The theme of racial tensions came as a powerful theme in this study. This theme reflected significant findings that assist in gaining an understanding of the function of racial microaggressions within the campus environment. Based on the findings of the study, it appears that racial microaggressions have two main functions: to regulate identity and to perpetuate the repetition of racist ideas. The former speaks to how the terms ‘white’ café and ‘black’ café are used to determine ingroup and outgroup membership and group identity. For example, the study’s findings indicated that black African students who identify with and purchase from the ‘black’ café are seen as belonging to the ingroup.

In contrast, black African students who identify with or purchase from the ‘white’ café are seen as outgroup members. Additionally, the polarized differences between the cafeterias themselves and the patrons of each café highlight who belongs to which café. An important dynamic that came from the study is that while black African students who identify with the

'black' café are members of the ingroup, they seem to be associated with a negative social identity, which for some participants impacted on their self-esteem. The negative social image is largely influenced by racial stereotypes about black people and their spaces. Thus, this links to the latter function of racial microaggressions used with the racial division of the cafeterias, which is to perpetuate and maintain (Williams et al., 2021) racist ideas about different racial groups. Participants' experiences of the number of within-group and self-perpetuated microaggressions highlight how participants are, to some, extent experiencing a repetition of South Africa's political history in terms of the Apartheid legacy as well as an internalization of negative stereotypes that stem from centuries of racial oppression, which are transferred from one generation to the next.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations**

This study explored the perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students, focusing on the notion of the ‘white’ and ‘black’ café at the Howard College Campus in the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The study used a qualitative methodology from an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis perspective. This chapter outlines the study's conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for future research. The study's overall objective was to explore how Black African students understand microaggressions related to racialized spaces on campus, namely the ‘white’ and ‘black’ café. This exploration included understanding how Black African students make sense of the terms used to describe the cafes, the type of microaggressions associated with these racialized spaces as well as how black African students experience microaggressions related to the racial division of spaces in the campus environment.

In accordance with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, four overarching super-ordinate themes and emergent subthemes were derived from the data. The themes are as follows: (1) Cultural identity, (2) Racial tensions at the campus, (3) Historical dynamics and (4) Socioeconomic background.

### **6.1. Conclusion**

The first theme highlighted how the use of the terms ‘white’ and ‘black’ café are a common trend in the campus environment and how these terms have become a normal part of everyday language among students. Additionally, this culture is readily accepted as students come into an already existing culture of referring to the cafeterias as ‘white’ and ‘black’ café. Participants indicated that most students use these terms without questioning the reason behind it, thus highlighting how students automatically immerse themselves into the culture of referring to the cafeterias as ‘white’ and ‘black’ café.

Based on the analysis, the ‘white’ and ‘black’ café serve as symbols of racial tensions on the campus, which are observed through intergroup processes. These tensions seem to mainly manifest in derogatory communications about the ‘black’ café and its patrons, while ‘white’ café appears to be associated with positive connotations. However, the study highlighted an important finding: While the ‘black’ café is associated with negative connotations, the findings of the study suggest that those who identify with it are members of the ingroup. Research on intergroup dynamics suggests that when members of a social group have a positive social image, there is a likelihood that this image is likely to positively influence one’s self-esteem

(Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The study's findings indicated that the ingroup ('black' café and its patrons) have a negative social identity as they are associated with negative racial stereotypes. In contrast, the outgroup ('white' café and its patrons) seems to have a more positive social image and is perceived as superior. While intergroup theories such as Social Identity Theory assert a positive social identity as an influencing factor to one's (based on their social group membership) esteem, there is scarce literature on what happens when social groups do not form a positive social identity. Theories of internalized racial oppression and microaggressions, however do address this shortfall.

The findings in this study corroborate the literature on internalized racial oppression and microaggressions, suggesting that prolonged or cumulative exposure to racial oppression can lead to explicit and implicit racist ideas and stereotypes being internalized by the marginalized group. It appears that this internalization can be passed down from one generation to the next, where current generations carry the traumas of their elders as if they directly witnessed and experienced the oppression themselves. Furthermore, in the South African context, this speaks to the legacy of the Apartheid regime, where ideologies of white supremacy continue to play out in post-Apartheid South Africa in subtle and covert forms. One can thus argue that microaggressions serve to perpetuate and uphold racist ideologies, which in the campus environment occur within the same group, speaking to the very nature of internalized oppression.

Socioeconomic disparities between those who purchase from the 'white' and 'black' café also painted a picture of the "typical" individual who purchases from the 'white' café versus one who purchases from the 'black' café. The socioeconomic disparities also highlight that identities (e.g. racial) can also intersect with class identity, such as the poor/financially disadvantaged versus the rich/wealthy. The intersectionality between these different identity markers is beyond the scope of this study and needs to be further researched.

## **6.2. Limitations and Recommendations**

This study only consisted of eleven participants; therefore, perceptions and experiences must be interpreted at an individual level and cannot be transferred to other populations. Furthermore, the notion of 'white' and 'black' café is specific to the Howard College Campus

at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, meaning that the findings from this study cannot be transferred to other South African universities. While the findings of the study cannot be transferred to other populations and contexts, this study provides a gateway for more research on racial microaggressions to be conducted in South African contexts in order to broaden and develop a better understanding of how microaggressions manifest and function in contexts that are different from America which most of the studies on microaggressions emerged. Another limitation of this study is that it was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic where there were strict regulations on accessing the campus. With strict regulations, only a few students were physically available to be approached on campus as prospective participants for the study. Due to the imposed Covid-19 restrictions, various attempts were made to approach participants as the researcher experienced difficulty finding participants. Furthermore, there were technical difficulties with some interviews (e.g. connection challenges) during the data collection phase as interviews were conducted on Zoom or telephonically. This obstacle made it difficult for the researcher to observe nonverbal cues, which could have possibly added more rich data to the study.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I: Registrar's Letter



16 February 2021

Vuyelwa Dladla (SN 213535850)  
School of Applied Human Science  
College of Humanities  
Howard College Campus  
UKZN

Email: [213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za) [Cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za)

Dear Vuyelwa

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

*"Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of white and black cafes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus".*

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample as follows:

- With a request for responses on the website. The questionnaire must be placed on the notice system <http://notices.ukzn.ac.za>. A copy of this letter (Gatekeeper's approval) must be simultaneously sent to [govenderlog@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:govenderlog@ukzn.ac.za) or [ramkissoobh@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ramkissoobh@ukzn.ac.za).

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance approval letter;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using the 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely



**DR KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR**

**Office of the Registrar**

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa  
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 7971 Email: [registrar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:registrar@ukzn.ac.za) Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

## Appendix II-Ethical Clearance



01 August 2021

Miss Vuyelwa Lungile Nokwanda Dladla (213535850)  
School Of Applied Human Sc  
Howard College

Dear Miss Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002852/2021

Project title: Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of white and black cafes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 27 July 2021 to our letter of 09 July 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

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

**This approval is valid for one year until 01 August 2022**

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully



.....  
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

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Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000  
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587  
Web site: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

**INSPIRING GREATNESS**

## Appendix III – Access to Counselling Services



Centre for Applied Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban 4041, South Africa.

Tel: +27 (0)31 260 7425

E-mail: [Psychclinic@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Psychclinic@ukzn.ac.za)

02 March 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**Student Name:** Vuyelwa Lungile Nokwanda Dladla  
**Student Number:** 213535850  
**Supervisor Name:** Professor Duncan James Cartwright

We herewith confirm that Ms Vuyelwa Lungile Nokwanda Dladla is a Masters Student in MSocSc (Counselling Psychology) at the Howard College Campus. As part of her studies, she will be required to conduct research.

**Her Topic/ Research Title:** Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of white and black cafés at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus

There might be potential traumatising of participants due to disclosing about stressful events that they may have experienced.

We herewith give permission from the Psychology Clinic to allow participants to access clinic services should it be necessary.

Yours Sincerely



Prof D Cartwright  
Director: Masters' Clinical \ Counselling Programme  
School of Psychology  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Howard College Campus  
P. Bag X54001  
Durban 4000  
031- 260 7425 (Administrator)  
[Cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix IV – Online Notice

### CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research topic:

Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of black and 'white' cafés at the University of KwaZulu Natal, Howard College Campus.

Dear Student:

Thank you for taking the time to read this call. My name is Vuyelwa Dladla; I am conducting a research study to obtain a Master of Social Science Degree in Counselling Psychology at the University of KwaZulu Natal. My research aims to explore how students experience and make sense of the white and black café phenomenon at the Howard College Campus.

I am seeking 12 students from the Howard College Campus to participate in this study. The required participants for this study must be:

1. Black African
2. In their third year of study and/or above (Students registered with the university from 2018 or before).
3. Students from any school/discipline who are enrolled at the Howard College Campus.

If you would like to participate in this study, you will be required to fill in consent and biographical forms and participate in an interview. All data collected in the research process will be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity. Students will be allowed to ask any questions should they require further clarification.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please email the following to the researcher at [213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

1. Full Name and Surname
2. Level of Study
3. Contact Number

When you have emailed, the researcher will contact you for further arrangements.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HSSREC/00002852/2021)

## Appendix V – Poster



### STUDY ON 'WHITE' AND 'BLACK' CAFES ON HOWARD COLLEGE CAMPUS

#### Participants needed for study on 'white' and 'black' cafes on the Howard College Campus.

Volunteers needed to take part in a study focusing on their perceptions and experiences of the 'white' café and 'black' café phenomenon at the Howard College Campus.

If you would like to take part in this study, you will be required to attend an online/telephonic interview ( $\pm 45$  minutes) with the researcher and answer questions relating to your perceptions of the 'white' café and 'black' café phenomenon.

#### Who can participate in this study?

The required participants for this study must be:

- Black African.
- In their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of study/and or above (Students registered with the university from 2018 or before).
- Students from any school/discipline who are enrolled at the Howard College Campus.

**If you are interested in participating, please email the following to the researcher at [213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za) :**

- Full Name and Surname
- Level of Study
- Contact Number

Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

For more information or questions about this study, please contact Miss

Vuyelwa Dladla on 060 505 7490 or [213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix VI –Information Sheet



University of KwaZulu Natal  
School of Applied Human Sciences  
Discipline of Psychology  
Howard College Campus

Dear student

My name is Vuyelwa Dladla, and I am conducting research to obtain a Master of Social Science Degree in Counselling Psychology at the University of KwaZulu Natal. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to inform you about my research and ask you to be a participant. My research aims to explore how students experience and make sense of the 'white' and 'black' café phenomenon at the Howard College Campus.

As part of this research, I would like to invite you to an interview with me to explore the 'white' and 'black' café phenomenon at the Howard College Campus based on your experiences and perceptions. The information for this study will be obtained from a biographical questionnaire form and a semi-structured interview. The interview will last for approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interview will be conducted on the Zoom platform. In the event that you cannot access the Zoom platform, the researcher will alternatively conduct a telephonic interview. Please note that the interviews will be recorded (with your informed permission) by means of an audio recorder and note-taking. You may choose not to answer any questions you might feel uncomfortable with; you will not be penalised. All data collected will be stored securely on a password-protected laptop device and external hard drive and destroyed through formatting and shredding after five years (2026).

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary, and should you choose to participate, you have the liberty to withdraw from the study at any given time. Your identity will remain anonymous in any discussions or publications made by the researcher. Should you feel distressed due to participating in this study, I will be available to talk to you about your

distress. If you still feel distressed, counselling services will be made available for you at the UKZN (Howard College Campus) Centre of Applied Psychology Clinic.

The results of the study will be published in the form of a written dissertation for academic purposes. They will be available at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. You will not be required to write any identifying information on the biographical questionnaire form, and your identity will remain confidential throughout the research process. Please note that there is no incentive (financial or otherwise) for participation in this study.

Should you decide to participate in this study, a link to Microsoft Forms will be emailed to you where you will find a consent form and a biographical form. Please fill in each section of the forms and initial at the bottom of the consent form as an indication that you fully understand and agree with

the study's conditions. Once you have filled in the forms, the researcher will receive a notification that you have filled and submitted the forms and will contact you to arrange a suitable time for the interview process.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this study. Should you require any further information regarding the study, you may contact me at:

Vuyelwa Dladla

Researcher

0605057490

[213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Professor Duncan Cartwright

Research Supervisor

0312602750

[Cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za)

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Committee (HSSREC/00002852/2021)

You may also contact the research office via:

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

UKZN Research Ethics Office, Westville Campus

Govern Mbeki Building

Tel: 031 260 8350/4557/3587

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

## Appendix VII – Consent Form

**Perceptions of racial microaggressions among university students: The notion of White and Black Cafes at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Howard College Campus.**

### CONSENT FORM

#### *DECLARATION OF PARTICIPANT*

I \_\_\_\_\_ confirm the following:

**1. I understand that I have been invited to participate in the study mentioned above, conducted by the researcher, Vuyelwa Dladla from the Department of Psychology at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**2. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**3. I understand that I am required to complete the biographical form.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**4. I understand that the researcher will interview me through the Zoom platform, or telephonically if I cannot access the Zoom platform for approximately 45 minutes to an hour.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**5. I give the researcher permission to audio record my interview**

- I agree
- I disagree

**6. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous in any discussions or publications made by the researcher.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**7. My participation in this study is informed.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**8. My participation in this study is voluntary.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**9. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any given time.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**10. I understand that there is no incentive (financial or otherwise) for participating in this study.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**11. I have not been pressured to participate in this study.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**12. I understand that the information collected will be stored in a secure storage and destroyed after five years**

- I agree
- I disagree

**13. I have been informed about counselling services available to me should I feel emotionally distressed due to participating in the study.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**14. Should I have further questions or require clarity about the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher and/or her research supervisor and have been given the necessary contact details.**

- I agree
- I disagree

**15. Please insert your initials and surname as an indication that you give informed consent to participate in this study:**

**16. Please indicate the date of giving consent to participate in the study(dd/mm/yy):**

**17. If you have any questions, please indicate below:**

**Microsoft Forms link:**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=1id0tCpDUeMFbFGsBktUTdzXehmR5tEgG02xNgN63BUNjQzR1I2RFVXOFo4REVJMDdPWloyOEtHTi4u>

Contact details:

1. Researcher: Vuyelwa Dladla

060 505 7490

Email: 213535850@stu.ukzn.ac.za

2. Research supervisor: Professor Duncan Cartwright

031 260 2507

Email: cartwrightd@ukzn.ac.za

## Appendix VIII – Biographical Form

Please complete the following:

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Race: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Home language: \_\_\_\_\_
5. How long have you been studying at UKZN? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Current year of study: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Have you ever bought at the black and/or white café? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Contact details (Cell phone and/or email address): \_\_\_\_\_

***\*Please note that contact details are for the researcher to contact you.***

## **Appendix IX – Interview Schedule**

### **Introducing the study**

Hi, my name is Vuyelwa, or you can call me Vuyi. Thank you so much for taking the time to participate in my study. As outlined in the invitation and information sheet you received, I am currently doing a master's degree in counselling psychology. I am conducting research on the perceptions of racial microaggressions in the campus environment of Howard College. By definition, racial microaggressions are “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 273).

In other words, microaggressions are subtle or hidden forms of racism. Specifically, my study focuses on the ‘White café’ and ‘Black café’ notion at the campus and how you as a Black African student on the campus understands this notion or phenomenon of ‘white’ and ‘black’ cafes. So basically, I am interested in your perceptions and how you makes sense of the use of the terms ‘white’ and ‘black’ cafes.

In the interview, I will ask you questions that require you to recount some of your experiences, and wherever possible, to share your feelings about these experiences both at the time you encountered these experiences, and now as you reflect on the encounters. Hearing the full narrative of your experiences, and the context within which it occurred, is important because it will clarify the example you will share with me in the interview. I expect that different students may describe a range of different—or similar—stories about your encounters at UKZN Howard College Campus. For this reason, there is no right or wrong answer. As much as possible, please share actual experiences that you have had, or those that you have witnessed as illustrative examples. Do you have any questions before we begin?

I will now switch on the digital recording device.

[TURN ON DIGITAL RECORDER]

**Firstly, for the sake of the recorded interview and to keep your identity anonymous, please could say your pseudonym (false name) that you would like to use:**

From now on, I will be asking you a few questions relating to microaggressions in the context of the 'white' and 'black' café. If there is a question that you don't understand or need clarity on, please feel free to let me know.

**1. How do you understand the terminology of white and black cafes?**

- *When you came to study at UKZN, what were your initial thoughts/reactions when you first heard the terminology of 'White' and 'Black' café?*
- *What do you think are the possible motivations for referring to the cafes as black and white?*

*\*{Try to establish if participant knows the actual/original name of the café}*

**2. What microaggressions are associated with these terms and racialized spaces?**

- *What messages do you think are communicated with such terminology?*
- *What function do you think the messages being implied or communicated by using the term black and white cafés serve in the campus environment?*
- *What are the differences (if any) between these cafes?*
- *From your point of view, how do you make sense of how these differences are racialized?*

**3. How do you experience and make sense of these microaggressions?**

- *What are your experiences in relation to purchasing from these cafes?*
- *Have you ever experienced a microaggression as a result of purchasing from the 'White' and/or 'Black' café?*
- *How did this encounter make you feel?*
- *If you take a moment to reflect on your experiences, how would you make sense of them?*
- *What have you observed from others who use these cafes?*
- *How do you make sense of what you have observed in others?*