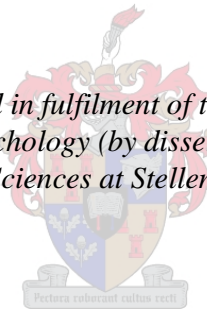


Lived Experiences of Hidden Racism of Students of Colour at an Historically White University

BY

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and Social Sciences at Stellenbosch University*



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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: April 2019

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ABSTRACT

Hidden racism denotes the racialised interactions performed by White people towards people of colour (POC). It defines an unconsciously natural stance most White people take during racially charged situations. This phenomenon is particularly prominent in interracial spaces where whiteness is normalised and POC are ostensibly the minority, such as at Historically White Institutions (HWIs). This qualitative study thus examines the hidden racial experiences of students of colour (SOC) attending an HWI. The impetus of this study was to comprehend the types of hidden racism encountered by SOC and the coping methods they use to shield themselves from such dehumanising indignities. Critical Race Theory was used as theoretical framework to analyse the findings. Twelve SOC were interviewed to share their counter-narratives of hidden racism. These interviews were subjected to interpretative phenomenological analysis. The findings show that hidden racism exists within lecture halls, residences and other social spaces surrounding the University. There were three major hidden racisms evident in this study: hidden racial insults, hidden racial invalidations, and alienation from opportunities. Besides these themes, two other themes emerged regarding the effects of hidden racism and the coping methods students use to deflect these effects. Ultimately, this study shows that hidden racial experiences are incredibly malignant for the academic and social development of SOC.

Keywords: hidden racism; racial microaggressions; Historically White Institutions; Critical Race Theory; coping methods; effects of hidden racism

OPSOMMING

Versteekte rassisme dui op die rasse-uitstortings wat deur Wit mense teenoor mense van kleur (MVK) uitgevoer word. Dit omskryf 'n onbewustelike, natuurlike houding wat meeste Wit mense tydens ras-gelaaide situasies neem. Hierdie verskynsel is veral prominent in interrassiese ruimtes waar Witheid genormaliseer word en MVK oënskynlik die minderheid is, soos by oorwegend Wit-Afrikaanse instellings. Hierdie kwalitatiewe studie ondersoek dus die versteekte rasse-ervarings van studente van kleur (SVK) wat 'n historiese Wit-Afrikaanse Universiteit bywoon. Die impetus vir hierdie studie was om die tipes versteekte rassismes wat deur SVK ondervind word, asook die hanteringsmetodes wat hulle gebruik om hulself te beskerm teen sulke onmenslike verontwaardiging, te begryp. Kritiese Rasteorie, as hierdie studie se teoretiese raamwerk, was gebruik om die bevindings te analiseer. Onderhoude was gevoer met 12 SVK om hul teenverhale van versteekte rassisme te deel. Hierdie onderhoude was onderworpe aan interpretatiewe fenomenologiese analise. Die bevindings toon dat versteekte rassisme binne lesingsale, koshuise en ander sosiale ruimtes rondom die Universiteit bestaan. Drie hoof versteekte rassismes het in hierdie studie voorgekom: Versteekte rassistiese beledigings, versteekte ras-ongeldigverklarings, en vervreemding van geleenthede. Benewens hierdie drie temas, het twee ander temas na vore gekom ten opsigte van die gevolge van versteekte rassisme en die hanteringsmetodes wat studente gebruik om hierdie effekte af te lei. Per slot van rekening, toon hierdie studie dat versteekte rasse-ervarings ongelooflik kwaadwillig is vir die akademiese en sosiale ontwikkeling van SVK.

Sleutelwoorde: verborge rassisme; rasse mikroaggressies; Historiese Wit Instellings; Kritiese Rasteorie; hanteringsmetodes; gevolge van verborge rassisme

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To Charlotte, we are kindled spirits from the land of small bubbly people who have no idea how to pump air into flat tyres. Thank you for allowing me to escape into a world of childhood banter, for cascading uncontrollable laughter into my lungs; for sending me 3-second nonsensical voice notes; for not complaining when I cannot eat anything on the menu because it is not vegan; for being cognizant to the issues of this country even though they are alien to you. You are everything and more.

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DEDICATION

To my David

I can still remember your delicate new-born skin brushing against mine as you wormed your way into my arms for refuge. I was shivering from fear, because you were so little, and I was such a clumsy 19-year-old. I did not want to drop you. I watched you fall asleep and listened to you breathe fervently. Your breathing was the most beautiful tune I had ever heard. I remember feeling an intense force of love paralyse me as fountains of tears made its way down my cheeks. I was overwhelmed that you belonged to me. I mean your mother's, but also mine, because I was there when she squealed in shock that you were to become part of our earthly world. I knew from that moment, you would ravish my heart and as your physical body rested in my arms nine months later, my heart imploded beautifully in my chest. Because, it was irrevocably enslaved by you. And I vowed I would do **ANYTHING** for you. This thesis is for you. For it represents the possibility to make **YOUR** dreams come true. Whether you desire to soar above the heavens or sail across the roaring seas to the Great Perhaps or create poetry with your body in front of an enormous crowd. My sweet boy, I will always be here to support your fantasies. Be whoever you want to be, Dav. Do not let manly constraints hinder your Godly potential.

You are incomprehensibly loved, to the moon and back.

With love – Auntie Ellie

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GLOSSARY

Hidden racism is a form of unintentional racial discrimination committed by White people to ostracise or mistreat people of colour (POC) due to their positionality as being a perceived inferior human race.

Historically White Institutions (HWIs) are those tertiary institutions in South Africa whose “histories, traditions, symbols, stories, icons, curriculum, and processes were all designed by whites, for whites, to reproduce whiteness via a white experience at the exclusion of others who, [since pre-1994], have been allowed in such spaces” (Brunsma, Brown, & Placier, 2012, p.719). These institutions continue to be marked by a White cultural ethos, are often populated by a White student majority and serve as reservoirs for White supremacy (Brunsma et al., 2012; Reddy, 2004; Steyn, 2016).

Historically White Afrikaans Institutions (HWAIs) are a sub-group of HWIs and refer to those universities that, prior to 1994, used Afrikaans as the official language of learning and teaching. However, post-1994, most of these universities have opted for an Afrikaans-English dual-medium agenda as a response to calls for transformation. In many cases, these universities were committed in preserving the apartheid government’s status quo (Bunting, 2004) and were, and still are, dominated by an Afrikaans-speaking managerial body. These universities, like HWIs, are sites for institutional whiteness and are frequently under scrutiny for trying to guard the Afrikaans language and heritage (Brick, 2006; De Vos, 2014; Du Plessis, 2006; Spaul & Shepherd, 2016).

People of Colour abbreviated as POC is often a term used in the United States (US) to denote the marginalised or disfranchised communities that have been targets of racial subordination by the hands of White people (Tatum, 1997). This term is not commonly used within the mainstream South African context as most South Africans racially define themselves based on apartheid’s 1950 Population Registration Act as either White, Black or Coloured (Posel, 2001). However, this term has gained popularity among young adults, especially within the university space, who conflate Black, Coloured and Indian bodies within this concept. As such, this thesis has utilised the term to denote marginalised individuals who share a common experience of racial discrimination.

Students of Colour abbreviated as SOC refer to all minority University students who recognise that they are an oppressed group, and primarily a minority group at predominately-White universities. As individuals, they can identify with and speak to the experiences of hidden racism as well as social and economic problems encountered by the broader group. Although this term is of American origin, this concept allows the inclusion of narratives from Coloured or Indian

identifying students who contest the collective South African term ‘Black’ but identify with experiences of racial oppression.

White People are those individuals, who under apartheid law, were defined as “European and later white” (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005, p. ix) or “obviously white” by their physical markers of paler skin (Posel, 2001, p. 660). It is common knowledge that White individuals in South Africa have largely benefited from the engineering of apartheid and as a result, they are often economically and socially advantaged to most South African POC.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

As racial diversity increases at South African universities, particularly at historically White institutions (HWIs) such as Stellenbosch University, so, too, could the incidence of modern racism. This modern manifestation of racism has been termed racial microaggression to delineate the recurring occurrence of racial prejudice faced by Black people and other ‘minority’ groups which is both ostensibly venomous, and unintentional (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggression can be understood as “commonplace verbal or behavioural indignities, whether conscious or unconscious, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 278). Although some scholars maintain that the term microaggression implies actions usually committed unknowingly, Lilienfeld (2017) makes a compelling counter-argument. He suggests that behaviours that are categorised as ‘microaggression’ infer some form of aggressiveness which is intentional. This intentional behaviour in racial microaggression may occur, for instance, when the aim is to humiliate the target of the behaviour.

In this study, the notion of *hidden racism* will be introduced to convey acts whose racism or racial bias may be concealed from the protagonist and may not be immediately obvious to the target of the behaviour. This term, hidden racism, is not novel as Mtose (2011) has referred to it in her study examining Black people’s overall experiences with daily forms of racism in South Africa. Mtose synonymised hidden racism with double talk to describe interactions that are often ambiguous, but still carry racist undertones. However, equating hidden racism to double-talk is flawed, because the latter, by definition, is “deliberately deceptive language” (Bramer, 1989, p. 68) while the former is not. This diverges significantly from the overall notion of racial microaggressions or hidden racism, because some White people may not actively be attempting to be racially biased towards people of colour (POC). Rather, White people have been historically socialised to perceive themselves from a superiority position while placing POC into the inferiority periphery. These beliefs are so engrained that White people are often not consciously aware that they are being racially prejudice. Thus, the conceptualisation of hidden racism is preferred to reflect this state of unintentionality of the behaviours. This definition does not imply that the act is all together non-existent, rather, it still infers the disguised or subtle forms it takes on within society. It describes a powerful vivid experience that sometimes seems unknown to the victim and perpetrator, but even though it is hidden it creates a tumorous internal attack within the victim that they are unable to explain. This study is interested in gaining a deeper understanding of those hidden messages or those ‘stop-and-think-about-it’ incidences that, according to Murphy and colleagues

(2012), can sap or tax the cognitive energy of students of colour (SOC¹) that can otherwise be better used to succeed in other avenues such as academics or social settings.

Sue and colleagues (2007) assert that the experience of racial microaggression frequently occur in spaces where individuals from different racial, cultural or ethnical backgrounds are forced to interact. Universities are such spaces that offer the opportunity for a blend of worlds to integrate. However, this integration of diverse minds and skin tones is not always a positive experience at HWIs for students who do not endorse or fit the hegemonic White norm that exemplifies these institutions. International studies have shown that SOC attending HWIs compared to those at predominately Black universities, often perceive these spaces as unwelcoming due to being exposed to deleterious experiences of violence, marginalisation, racial discrimination, harassment and intolerance (Allen, 1992; Caplan & Ford, 2014; Gibbs, 1973; Harwood et al., 2012, 2015; Hurtado, 1992; Solórzano, 1998; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008; Sue et al., 2009; Watkins, 2012; Yosso et al., 2009). This is ostensible when we look at the student-led protests within the US and South African context with the common thread that SOC seem discontent at these HWIs because of the repeated exposure to blatant and racially microaggressive practices. For instance, The *Voices of Diversity Project* at Harvard University was created to document the experiences of overt and covert racism, and sexism that affect SOC, and women at historical White campuses (Caplan & Ford, 2014). The project found that on-campus issues, such as microaggression, are problematic because they can hamper a SOC's educational trajectory. Other projects such as the *I, too, am Harvard* campaign and protest action that erupted at other well-known HWIs such as UC Berkley and Princeton University also illuminated the highly racialised atmosphere where SOC feel devalued.

In South Africa, the same level of dissatisfaction with HWIs was seen throughout the 2015/2016 student protests that attempted to challenge the dominant White culture in universities like Stellenbosch. In the case of Stellenbosch University, the University is one of the most prestigious, and oldest traditionally White Afrikaans university in South Africa celebrating its centenary in 2018. It is here that zealous apartheid politicians such as Hendrik Verwoerd and D.F. Malan were educated or held professional academic careers, and ultimately birthed the idea of implanting the legalised system of apartheid to protect minority White privilege. It is public knowledge that Stellenbosch University has been a key institution in successfully preserving the Afrikaner history and culture through its language policy and campus activities such as *Huisdans* that essentially excludes 'othered' identities (Brick, 2006). Moreover, until 2015, there was a vast

¹ Although this term is of American origin, this concept allows the inclusion of narratives from Coloured or Indian identifying students who contest the collective South African term 'Black' but identify with experiences of racial oppression. It should also be noted that the participants of this study defined themselves in this manner and often used this term interchangeably with the term people of colour (POC).

number of buildings and statues that commemorated apartheid figures like Verwoerd but were renamed or removed as a symbol of the University's effort to create a more inclusive space for the increasing number of minority students being admitted to the institution. However, despite this display of transformation, in the past three years, the university has been scrutinised about the ongoing racism, academic and social exclusion of SOC. SOC continue to be dissatisfied with the university evident in the documentary *Luister* (Nicolson, 2015) which exposed narratives of blatant and subtle racism, and Open Stellenbosch Collective's (2015) campaign, both which appealed to management to transform the cultural and linguistic ethos of the University that essentially exacerbates the racial, social and academic subordination of SOC.

As such, given the highly racialised campus space at Stellenbosch University as seen in *Luister* and Open Stellenbosch Collective's campaign, this research study focuses on the narratives of hidden racism that SOC experience daily at Stellenbosch University. There is a significant amount of research on blatant forms of racism, but Sue and his research team (2007) contend that subtle or hidden forms, in their seemingly innocuous state, create more harm to the victims than overt forms as the intention of the latter is less ambiguous. The cumulative effects of day-to-day encounters with hidden racism have been shown to impair academic, social and emotional performance for SOC (Caplan & Ford, 2014; Harwood et al., 2012; Sue et al., 2007). This study is of crucial importance within the university context as these institutions are responsible for creating a safe educational space where students can engage critically with literature and feel a sense of inclusion. However, this feeling of belonging, due to historical reasons, is always challenging for SOC, as they are perceived as the minority group. This study holds the assumption that experiencing hidden racism may amplify feelings of nonconformity or exclusion for SOC. It is thus important to explore SOC encounters with these hidden biases to comprehend the impact these covert indignities have on their overall university experience. These hidden expressions of racism may not be performed deliberately, but their existence highlights deeper problems within our society that needs to be addressed.

1.2. Context of the Study

The 2015 academic year was an eventful year for many university students as mass revolts escalated all over the country in attempts to challenge colonialist ideologies still being exercised at higher institutions. Most SOC took to the public arena – the campus space, social media, the streets and governmental institutions such as the Union Buildings to express their grievances about pertinent issues: fee increments, racism, language exclusion, outsourcing of university staff, and colonialist symbolism across campuses. These student-led mobilisations were mostly orchestrated

on former White universities such as UCT, Wits and Stellenbosch University, which are still arguably the epicentres of racial tension and discourse.

The Open Stellenbosch campaign was one of such student-led organisations created to address the normalisation of the conservative Afrikaans culture on a public campus that results in the discrimination, and exclusion of persons who do not fit this 'norm' (Naicker, 2016; Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015). Open Stellenbosch's main emphasis during the time of the protests was on the marginalisation of the Black student on a campus that predominately functioned on an apartheid nostalgia, especially that concerning the hegemonic use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction at the university. The use of Afrikaans at a public institution, like the display of the Cecil Rhodes statue at UCT, is arguably traumatic for SOC as it symbolises a celebration, and preference for whiteness at the cost of other racial and cultural identities. It symbolises years of victimisation that SOC endured during White oppression when they were forced to learn the language of the oppressors - Afrikaans (Boyer, 2013). Open Stellenbosch Collective (2015) further asserts that the presence of Afrikaans at the University is disruptive as it entitles White-Afrikaans students to the university who constantly question why some SOC, specifically Black students, attend the institution when they are not able to comprehend Afrikaans. This generates continued racial tension between Whites and SOC.

There is a clutching and protection of the language and culture at the University that tells 'othered' identities that they do not belong there in very subtle ways. For example, there are still buildings that salute apartheid sympathisers such as the Wilcocks named after professor Raymond Wilcocks who was Hendrik Verwoerd's doctoral supervisor (Long, 2016). He is credited as the brains behind laws which prohibited interracial contact between different racial groups, ideologies about the intellectual inferiority of Black people, and insisted that better-paying jobs be reserved for Whites (Pinto de Almeida, 2015). Parts of the Wilcocks was burnt down in December 2010, but it has since been rebuilt. On the University website, the architecture is described as a symbol of "renewal and reconciliation" ignoring the sickening history of Wilcocks' part in the dehumanisation of Black bodies and his intent to propagate notions of Black intellectual inferiority. This speaks volumes to a SOC who comes into this space and is constantly reminded that they are not welcomed, because their being is not recognised let alone celebrated. They must digest the idea that a White man like Wilcocks disdained their existence and be evasive to this knowledge while simultaneously focusing on their academics.

Another one of Open Stellenbosch Collective's (2015) requests was for the University to change the cultural preference of Afrikaners to honour other diverse cultures that reflect the demographics of South Africa. Without a commitment to changing the institutional culture of Stellenbosch, SOC in these dominant Afrikaans spaces shall frequently feel discriminated against

due to not fitting the hegemonic Afrikaans norm. This was evident in the documentary *Luister* – a documentary created by Countraband Cape Town, who worked alongside Open Stellenbosch, to expose the ongoing racism Black students at Stellenbosch experience (Nicolson, 2015).

Countraband interviewed 32 students about their lived experiences where one student made a profound statement that describes the kind of environment Stellenbosch represents, one of exclusion and prejudice, by stating that: “the colour of my skin in Stellenbosch is like a social burden. I mean just walking into spaces, there's that stop, pause, and stare where people cannot believe that you would enter into this space” (Countraband as cited in Nicolson, 2015).

Another student shared an encounter he had with White Afrikaners by lamenting that, “If you don't speak Afrikaans, you don't belong here” (Countraband as cited in Nicolson, 2015). Other students also brought attention to their discomfort with Afrikaans lectures, negative stereotypes about Black intelligence or being policed on campus that left them feeling alienated. The *Luister* video received a significant amount of criticism from persons, mainly White, who found the incidents overly sensationalised, and apparently not accurate of the happenings of the university. The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Wim de Villiers, criticised the documentary by arguing that the university is dedicated to transformation, and that it is a fabrication that the university promotes an apartheid culture (Nicolson, 2015). Instead of empathizing with Black students, Prof. De Villiers' defensive statement ostensibly nullifies the experiences of racism encountered by SOC arguably telling students who are continuously victimised that their narratives are pathologically inaccurate.

South African universities have a long way to go in addressing issues that were raised during the student movements of the last three years which were arguably iconic such as the *Luister* documentary. These movements prove that SOC are recreating their own stories and challenging White discourses so that traditionally White universities can start to deconstruct whiteness in place of a cultural ethos that represents the demographics of the country. However, until this is objective is actualised, SOC will continue to embody the outsider traveller at Stellenbosch, they will continue to be a minority and alienated group and thus remain victims of both overt and hidden racism. By examining narratives of hidden racism, one can generate great understanding about the cultural and socio-political terrain of Stellenbosch University and one can decipher the level of transformation needed.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

The subject matter of racial microaggression has attracted a significant amount of focus in academia, however, most of these insightful research projects have been developed from a predominately US framework (Hall & Fields, 2015; Hotchkins, 2016; Nadal et al., 2011; Solórzano,

Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue et al., 2007, 2009). Thus, much of what is known about racial microaggression is based on the experiences of African Americans and other marginalised groups due to their minority status within a dominant White American society. This differs significantly in the South African context where Black people are the majority and are still expected to assimilate to the White minority standards. This assimilation to Whiteness is almost mandatory when young SOC enter academic spaces like universities. Badat (2011) asserts that prior to 1994, these HWIs were characterised by a dominant White-male academic and administrative staff; lack of cultural and racial diversity; and conduct that was “racist and sexist” in nature (p.144). As a result of HWIs still maintaining a Eurocentric institutional ethos as identified by Badat (2011), SOC are more prone to encounter daily hidden derogations on their ‘otherness’. Thus, it would be interesting to document the kinds of hidden racisms SOC experience daily as a consequence of being in an HWI. There is limited research in South Africa that has been devoted to exploring the kind of subtle racial prejudice SOC encounter and essentially the coping strategies they employ to alleviate feelings of isolation, anxiety and stress in the face of hidden racism. This study hopes to address these gaps and initiate dialogue about the impact of hidden racism on SOC. Secondly, it aims to raise awareness and provide practical measures to be more supportive of the experiences of SOC.

1.4. Aims of the Study

The aim of the current study was to explore the types of hidden racism experienced by SOC at a historically White, and Afrikaans, University². A secondary focus was to examine the coping methods SOC utilise to deflect such racialised incidences.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of the current study was attained through the following objectives:

- To gain insight into the everyday experiences of hidden racism that affect SOC at Stellenbosch University
- To identify the various forms of hidden racism that SOC encounter
- To identify the impact of hidden racism on SOC
- To identify the coping strategies SOC utilise to deflect perceived hidden racism

² Note that I do not attempt to explore whether ‘hidden racial’ behaviours exist at Stellenbosch University because it is already widely accepted that all forms of racism are evident wherever there is interracial socialisation (Sue et al., 2007, 2008).

1.6. Research Question

There were two primary questions that directed the focus of this research project:

- What are the lived experiences and the type of hidden racism faced by SOC studying at a historically White campus?
- What kind of coping strategies do SOC employ to deal with perceived hidden racial prejudice?

1.7. Overview of the Chapters

Each of the five chapters in this thesis has been written in a way to provide detailed knowledge about hidden racism within the university space. Below is a summary of each chapter:

Chapter 1: This chapter gives readers a brief introduction to the study by specifying the context of the study, the relevant primary and secondary objectives and the research questions that informed these objectives.

Chapter 2: This chapter presents the literature review of this thesis, which mainly focuses on a discussion of the definition of racial microaggression, the racial microaggression typology, the effects of hidden racism, and a brief discussion on methods coping. This is followed by a description of the theoretical framework. This chapter ends with a summary of all the points discussed in each section.

Chapter 3: This chapter presents the research methodology pertinent to this current research project. Here, a discussion about the research design of interpretative phenomenology (IP) with a Critical Race Theory (CRT) counter-narrative methodological approach is described. Readers will also find information about the different types of sampling techniques that were employed, the data collection and analytical procedures as well as an ethical and reflexivity component.

Chapter 4: This chapter introduces the participants of this study. It presents the data findings, such as the themes obtained from the analysis tool. These findings reflect the perspectives of the participants and quotes are provided as evidence from the interview transcriptions.

Chapter 5: This chapter draws together the findings of Chapter 4 with the supporting literature. A discussion on the implications and recommendations of this study and an engagement with the limitations of the study will also be presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a synthesis of literature regarding the phenomenon of racial microaggression. Firstly, a definition of racial microaggression including the racial microaggression typology that consists of racial microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations will be provided. This is then followed with a discussion on the effects of racial microaggression on SOC which will highlight debates around the importance of continued research on the topic matter. A brief section on theories of coping and examples of how POC cope with perceived racial bias is also provided. Finally, the theoretical framework guiding this thesis, Critical Race Theory (CRT), will be presented and described. CRT will serve as a lens throughout the entire research process to evaluate SOC's experience of hidden racism.

2.2. Defining Racial Microaggression

Racism continues to dance within 21st century society in unconventional ways. The literature search on this 'unconventional racism' has termed it *racial microaggressions*. The term was initially devised by Chester Pierce in the 70s to describe the everyday unconscious derogations Black Americans experience by or through their interactions with White people (Lewis et al., 2013; Solórzano, 1998; Sue et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2014). Most scholars contend that, although some White people might be explicitly pro-equality, some still foster implicit negative prejudices towards POC or ethnic groups (Murphy et al., 2012; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2014). This is not surprising, as the residual effect of a racialised system such as apartheid, even after its abolishment, cannot simply be minimised. The apartheid government socialised and enculturated South Africans into racialised mind-sets, leading the minority White population to have preconceived ideas that they were superior to POC, resulting in overt and covert subjugation of ethnic groups.

Sue et al. (2009) contend that White people, as a result of their hegemonic and privileged position, may involuntarily internalise and endorse supremacist views that can lead to the discrimination, and invalidation of POC. It can be argued that White supremacy is a learnt response from years of indoctrination; therefore, White people cannot be blamed for harbouring underlying negative biases, because like Black generational trauma, Whites also inherited generational bias and privilege that cannot easily be erased. Rather, these entrenched views must be challenged by contributing to scholarly research and introducing the counter-stories of POC.

Whereas Chester Pierce focused more on the racial microaggressions experienced by Black Americans, Sue and co-authors (2007), building on Pierce's work and other writers of racial prejudices, have modified the term to be more inclusive of racial minorities that may be targets of White implicit prejudice. Sue and his team define racial microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group," (2007, p. 273). For this current research, environmental derogations will not be explored, because it generally focuses on macrolevel factors such as how policies and environmental stimuli perpetuate subtle racism and is arguably a research initiative in its own right.

Lilienfeld (2017) makes a compelling argument about the meaning behind the term 'microaggression' by arguing that behaviours categorised under the label infer, to a greater extent, some form of aggressiveness which is intentional in nature. However, Lilienfeld (2017) stipulates that the term is conflicting and misleading since current research on microaggression imply that such actions are usually committed unknowingly. Thus, the term racial microaggression should be renamed to avoid ambiguity. Since, in essence, the term refers to subtle forms of racism, the current paper will make use of the term *hidden racism* to reflect the unintentional, thus non-aggressive (at least at a surface level) nature of the behaviours. However, this does not completely invisibilise the powerful effects of such an experience on the mental energies of POC. The concept of hidden racism is similar to and can be a form of what education and sociology scholars call the *hidden curriculum* which is conceptualised as the "unspoken or implicit values, behaviours, and norms that exist in the educational setting" (Alsubaie, 2015, p. 125). Like the effects of hidden racism, little attention is often given to the detrimental consequences of the hidden curriculum as it socialises students to think in a manner that defines or mirrors the dominant social-political ethos of the institution or attitudes from the broader society. Leask (2009), as well as Killick (2016), assert that the hidden curriculum is influenced by the social, cultural and economic ideologies of the group who hold the most cultural capital on campus. Consequently, hidden racist behaviours are a direct result of such hidden teachings.

2.2.1. The different faces of racial microaggression. Sue and his colleagues (2007) have contributed a great deal to the research on racial microaggressions, proposing a taxonomy. This taxonomy consists of three different manifestations, namely microassaults, microinsults and microinvalidations. According to Sue et al. (2007, 2009), microassaults are more similar to old fashioned racism as they are often deliberate verbal, nonverbal or environmental racial attacks that are intended to demean POC. For example, in Mtose's (2011) study, a microassault was identified in which some participants encountered racial animus such as being called a 'kaffir' or treated like

criminals based on their Blackness. Another example by Sue et al. (2007) stipulates that when White people refuse to serve a POC at a public space, it is considered a microassault. This type of racial microaggression has been criticised for being too similar or overlapping with the conceptual definition of the overt kind of racism (Lilienfeld, 2017; Wong et al., 2014). This criticism is justifiable as microassaults are, by definition, deliberate acts thus contradicting the ‘unintentional’ aspect of racial microaggressions defined by Pierce and later, Sue and his research team. Also, the ‘micro’ aspect of microassaults is often a misnomer – implying these forms of derogations are less harmful than traditional racism despite the overlapping similarities. Sue and co-authors (2007) attempted to differentiate microassaults from traditional racism by arguing that the former is usually perpetuated in private settings where perpetrators have “some degree of anonymity” (p. 274). However, conceptually there is no identifiable variation between microassaults and overt racism. In most of Sue et al.’s work (2007, 2009), they defined microassaults, but frequently mentioned that they would not use this category in their research as they were interested in the unconscious manifestations of subtle racism, which described the latter two microaggression forms. Thus, it is unclear why Sue and his team have even created the microassault category if they also acknowledge its resemblance to overt racism, and never explore or operationalise it in their own research.

The other two categories, microinsults and microinvalidations, illustrate a more contemporary form of racism as they are presumably more automatic, subtle and are ostensibly far more damaging than microassaults as they are frequently glossed over as blameless (Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2014). In addition to this taxonomy, the authors have also delineated eight subthemes to the two abovementioned forms of microaggression. Microinsults are conceptualised as any actions (verbal, nonverbal or environmental) that communicate “rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s racial identity or heritage” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). For example, commenting on the way a Black person speaks English in a manner that is on par with Eurocentric thinking or ‘congratulating’ a Black person for not being the stereotypical ‘Black’ are examples of a microinsult. The four subthemes identified in microinsults include: 1) assumption of criminality on the basis of race; 2) ascribing certain levels of intelligence on the basis of race; 3) treating someone as a second-class citizen, and 4) insinuating that Eurocentric values and communication styles are the norm (Sue et al., 2007).

Microinvalidations intend to invalidate, deny or diminish the racialised realities of POC such as a belief in a colour-blind worldview or ignorance towards the existence of racism, or White people believing that other racial groups are foreigners in their own land (Forest-Bank & Jenson, 2015; Sue et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2014). Another example of a microinvalidation is the perpetuation of meritocratic values in which some Whites hold the proposition that everyone starts off at the same pace, and if POC simply apply themselves to certain goals, they will attain the

positions they envision for themselves. This is what Mhlauli, Salani and Mokotedi (2015) refer to as epistemological ignorance - White people think that their whiteness is normative and other racial groups should acknowledge that inequalities exist, because some people are superior in every calibre of life. However, Sue and colleagues (2007) argue that the problem with this type of thinking is that Whites often ignore the history of oppression and the incapacitating effects of oppressive structural systems that perpetuate the inferiority of POC. This was demonstrated in the student protests when opposing students or staff simply argued that if SOC worked hard enough they would receive bursaries to afford school fees – this is an example of a microinvalidation as they did not acknowledge the cumulative effects of structural forces, such as generational poverty, inadequate secondary education or not enough monetary rewards for all students, that continue to disadvantage Black youth.

The subthemes under this category include: 1) belief in colour-blind world; 2) feeling foreign in one's country; 3) belief in meritocracy, and 4) denying one's racism (Sue et al., 2007). The taxonomy has been employed by a variety of scholars in their own research endeavours. For instance, a qualitative study conducted by Harwood and colleagues (2012) exploring the experiences of SOC in an HWI found that participants experienced all three forms of racial microaggressions such as racial epithets, ignorance of existing racism and racial insults. Forrest-Bank and Jenson (2015) conducted a quantitative study on the different experiences of microaggression encountered by Black Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Whites by using the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (consisting of six subscales, including Microinvalidations). The study revealed that Black participants experienced the most micro-aggressive incidents, especially microinvalidations, compared to any other racial group. Other studies have not specifically used the taxonomy but have examined the subject matter of racial microaggression such as focusing mainly on the intersectionality of gender and racial microaggression on Black female students (Lewis et al., 2013).

It would thus be interesting to draw from and apply Sue and co-authors' (2007) taxonomy within the Stellenbosch campus – to examine how or if these categories even manifest in the same manner; the different subthemes we find that reflect this South African HWI and how SOC potentially deal with these hidden mortifications.

2.3. The Impact of Hidden Racism

The experience of hidden racism, which is frequently concealed as affirmative or insignificant racial statements, can have profound effects on POC's mental, academic and social trajectory. For instance, a study conducted by Nadal and co-authors (2014) found racial

microaggression to exert a negative impact on self-esteem. Having a low self-esteem can in turn have a marked influence on students' academic, and social performance – they will be less motivated to achieve their academic pursuits or have the confidence to socialise with others (Ferkany, 2008). In addition, Wang and co-authors (2011) assert that low self-esteem can cause mental health issues such as negative emotions, depression and anxiety which can create macro level problems for students.

The unintentional, ambiguous nature of racial microaggressions creates a stressful atmosphere for victims who often must figure out whether they are being oversensitive or have to deal with perpetrators who can effortlessly dismiss their experiences (Harrell, 2000; Wang et al., 2011). During an interracial incident that may have some racist undertone a POC has to use a large set of her/his cognitive resources: 1) to understand whether hidden racism actually occurred; 2) to assess whether they should respond to the perceived racial discrimination or not, and 3) to assess the consequences thereof of responding to the perpetrator (Wong et al., 2014). Sue et al. (2007) call this dilemma the “catch-22 of responding to racial microaggressions” (p. 279) to describe the extreme effort POC go through. The act of wandering about whether a subtle racist act occurred can sap or tax the cognitive energy of SOC that can otherwise be better used to succeed in other avenues such as academics or social settings (Murphy et al., 2012; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Sue et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2014). This sapping of cognitive energy was demonstrated in a study conducted by Salvatore and Shelton (2007) who examined the effects of blatant and ambiguous discrimination on the cognitive energies of Black and White participants. The study found that White participants were less likely to exhaust cognitive resources during an ambiguous prejudicial encounter while Black participants were more inclined to utilise a large portion of their cognitive resources to make sense of a prejudicial situation. The researchers concluded that individuals from previously oppressed groups are more motivated to exhaust their cognitive energies, because they want to attain a satisfying reason for why a subtle racist incident occurred and this focus can cause them to perform poorly on other cognitive tasks. Other research reveals that the perception of racial discrimination, within the campus setting, is significantly associated with poor academic performance and retention or increased dropout rates (Chavous, 2002; Hurtado et al., 1998; Steele, 1997; Watkins, 2012; Yosso et al., 2009).

These aversive psychological and academic outcomes are arguably reason enough to continue extensive research on racial microaggression on SOC despite the already booming impetus.

2.4. Coping Mechanisms Used to Deflect Hidden Racism

The secondary impetus of this research is to assess the coping methods used by SOC to alleviate or combat the experience of hidden racism. The experience of any form of racism can contribute to additional challenges that SOC have to deal with on top of trying to juggle other responsibilities such as academics or personal relationships. The ways in which SOC cope with experiences of hidden racism are important to explore, because these coping techniques can determine or reveal the level of adaptation of students on campus despite being targeted by dehumanising innocuous stings. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualise coping as the “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 141). That is, when SOC encounter hidden racism, whether they are aware of it or not, they intentionally employ specific coping mechanism to help them make sense of or reverse the effects of the perceived incident.

There are a variety of coping frameworks available in the literature which attempt to explain the multiple ways individuals manage distressing situations like racism. However, this research will use three concepts to understand and categorise how SOC cope with distressful circumstances like hidden racism. The first two concepts originate from the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) who identified *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused* coping mechanisms. Problem-focused mechanisms are viewed as specific behaviours or actions individuals engage in to alter or abolish the source of distress (Kim et al., 2003). The *I, Too, Am Harvard* campaign is an example of a problem-focused coping strategy. The campaign, created by Kimiko Matsuda-Lawrence, aims at exposing the lived realities of minority students at Harvard and directly challenges institutional racism which is problem-focused in nature.

Emotion-focused mechanisms are directed at resolving the emotional turmoil emanating from a stressful situation (Kim et al., 2003). Liang et al. (2007) suggest that individuals who used more emotion-focused coping often seek or rely on social support to deflect the internal conflict. This type of emotion-focused coping has been shown in most studies of hidden racism (Hernandez, Carranza, & Almeida, 2010; Lewis et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2008). For example, the participants in Lewis and colleagues’ study (2013) used collective coping, that is, relying on other Black women for validation and as a source of comfort. In Sue and colleagues’ (2008) study this is termed “sanity check” when POC vent to other POC about experienced racism because they can relate to such encounters. Hernandez, Carranza, and Almeida (2010) as well as Giwa (2016) found that some participants deal with hidden racism by using humour to minimise the emotional burden. This can be a form of both emotion-focused and avoidance coping (the third type), because

it does not eradicate the issue at hand only displacing it. In both the Giwa (2016) and Hernandez et al. (2010) studies, participants also reported using religious rituals, specifically praying, as self-management mechanisms to deal with race-based emotional trauma.

The third concept, *avoidance* coping, is based on the work of Billings and Moos (1984) which consists of behaviours or attitudes that deny, diminish or ignore the stressful situation so the individual evades dealing with it. A study conducted by Krieger (1990) exploring the correlation between racism and genderism in the risk for women developing high blood pressure, found that Black women were more likely to use avoidant coping strategies in response to both racial and gender discrimination than White women. They were more inclined to remain silent in such situations. Lewis et al.'s (2013) research also showed that Black female students used escapism to ignore hidden racism or become completely numb towards racial incidents as a means to shield themselves from dealing with it.

In conclusion, POC use a variety of techniques to cope with hidden racism. These techniques can be categorised as being problem, emotion or avoidance-focused. It is arguably important to explore the types of coping methods SOC employ to combat the cumulative impact of hidden racism. This way, we can decipher the effectiveness of such techniques to potentially direct future research that develops prevention schemes which will provide minority students at HWIs techniques to relieve distress emanating from racial discrimination.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

This study's theoretical framework draws on Critical Race Theory (CRT). Conversations about race and racial bias always creates an uncomfortable, almost taboo, atmosphere in spaces where there are a multitude of diverse expressions of melanin, because narratives that emerge from such discussions often illuminate the harsh truths about the continued subordination of POC. However, CRT attempts to disrupt those awkward spaces in a beautifully clamorous way so that dominant systems that often disrupt the social and emotional life of POC can be challenged, and ultimately be transformed for the betterment of all humans irrespective of skin tone. The fundamental focus of the CRT framework is to examine the impact of race and racism on various social structures, and to eventually erase all forms of racial injustices within society. All CRT scholars (such as Graham et al., 2011; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Malagon et al., 2009; Solórzano & Bernal, 2001; Quaye & Chang, 2012) share five fundamental tenets, which can be used to expose and understand the racialised experiences of hidden racism in HWIs like Stellenbosch. The tenets are discussed below.

2.5.1. Tenets of critical race theory.

The permanence of racism. CRT challenges the belief that racism withered away with the apartheid law. It postulates the omnipresent and incurable nature of racism in society particularly within higher education. Delgado, Stefancic and Harris (2001) assert that it is incredibly difficult for White people to acknowledge the immortality of racism, because it is deeply permeated in their mental and social structures. It is crucial that race and racism be foregrounded for meaningful change to occur within institutions. This focus is applicable to this research study as it is common knowledge that the South African society is deeply marked by a racialised past, and this is especially true within the town of Stellenbosch where the apartheid doctrine was gospel (Boyer, 2013; Dubow, 2015). More specifically, focusing on race is essential within an institution that previously used racial classification and linguistic preference as a weapon to discriminate against SOC. That is, prior to 1994, minority students who were not White nor Afrikaans were lawfully restricted from attending Stellenbosch University. Despite some pertinent transformative changes post-1994, the 2015/2016 student protests have shown that SOC still feel marginalised at the University due to the favouring of the Afrikaner culture and Afrikaans as the primary mode of communication (Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015). Thus, without a commitment to foregrounding racism in academia the university will remain a museum to propagate Afrikanerdom.

Similarly, CRT also acknowledges the intersectionality of race/racism with other identities (Solórzano, 1998; Yosso, 2005). This assumption attempts to explain the ways in which race and racism are used as tools to subordinate other identities marginalised people perform such as gender, class, accent, and sexuality. The idea of intersectionality is also applicable as it focuses on the ways in which Black peoples' multiple identities, such as being Black and male, or being Black and having a specific accent, may be reasons for experiencing subtle oppression and ultimately alienation from the university experience.

The critique of liberalism. CRT attempts to challenge claims of neutrality, colour-blindness and meritocracy in higher education (Möschel, 2014). The idea of neutrality gravitates towards the notion that all students are treated equally on campus irrespective of their racial identity. Meritocracy is the belief that students can achieve their academic objectives if they just apply themselves irrespective of their social circumstances (Lui, 2011; Sleeter, 2016). The “rainbow nation” ideology that democratic South Africa feeds our people is a beautiful example of colour-blindness. Colour-blindness attempts to emphasize a commonality between people – race does not exist, because we are all humans. Similarly, the rainbow nation dream advocates for South Africans to embrace each other as physically different, because being physically different is aesthetic and a strong quality of the nation. However, a consequence of this ideology is a blindness to acknowledge

the blatant fact that POC are victimised by racism daily and that there are great social, economic and educational disparities between diverse racial groups. This focus on a commonality of humanity is an effort made by many universities to try to promote a multicultural space so that racism and all other forms of subordination can be eradicated. At Stellenbosch, colour-blindness can be seen in academic and social policies that maintain racial inequalities because most of these policies are skewed in favour of preserving the Afrikaans culture while promoting diversity. This strategy can prove to be counterproductive, because by privileging one culture over others, it can create the traditional perception amongst Afrikaans students that they are racially, and culturally superior. According to Yosso (2005), with similar sentiments made by Hiraldo (2010) and Sleeter (2016), CRT is geared towards challenging these myths because they camouflage White privilege and co-conspire in the subjugation of SOC.

The validation and centralisation of experiential knowledge. Dominant stories, those narrated from a White perspective, often conceal or deny the existence of racism, because in the White narrative racism died when a White minority agreed to end the oppression of Black bodies by illegalising apartheid and electing a Black president in 1994; racism died when democratic South Africa adopted a ‘rainbow nation’ discourse. However, Sleeter (2016) as well as Malagon and co-authors (2009) contend that we cannot understand racism by listening to the stories of those in power or perpetrators of racism, because these narratives are continuously skewed to benefit the social and economic elite. Instead, CRT theorists assert that we must acknowledge and legitimise the lived, every-day, experiences of the victims of racism to comprehend and transform racial inequalities. Experiential knowledge necessitates emphasis on methodologies such as counter-storytelling in which the voices of POC are legitimised by taking their accounts of racial subordination as valid, because they are victimised by it (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Counter-stories give POC an opportunity to redefine and reinterpret majoritarian archives and it simultaneously challenges the dominant groups’ transparency to racism.

Elevating the importance of race and racism within an interdisciplinary approach. CRT’s interdisciplinary aspect argues for theorists to draw on a variety of other disciplines or frameworks, such as history, psychology, feminism, or liberalism, to inform their analysis and understanding of racial inequality within society (Möschel, 2014). This thesis is interdisciplinary in nature as it positions the experience of Blackness and hidden racism within a historical context. Huber and Solórzano (2015) suggest that CRT does this by examining how dominant ideologies, race and racism has been historically perpetuated within society, including in the education sector, and how these forces continue to invade, and dictate the contemporary experiences of POC. This focus on a historical contextualisation is arguably important for this thesis, because it disputes the notion of a rainbow nation or non-racist society as continued evidence, such as that seen in *Luister*, shows that

the effects of apartheid social and educational policies still linger on present SOC's experiences of racism in both overt and covert forms.

Focus on scholarships responsibility to ensure social justice to eradicate racism. CRT scholars' ultimate objective is to eradicate all forms of racial discrimination that upholds the status quo. CRT's social justice agenda attempts to move from the majoritarian way of conceptualising POC as deficit-beings towards a social justice framework that highlights POC resilience in deflecting routine experiences of racism (Malagon et al., 2009; Viesca et al., 2013). Moving away from a victim standpoint can equip SOC a means to forcefully challenge blatant, and implicit racism head on and can emancipate them from frequently questioning their being in HWIs. Through counter-narratives, CRT researchers can gain insights about coping mechanisms SOC employ in the face of racism and this can help inform transformative measures that aids in creating a racially inclusive academic space as well as provide other SOC, who are battling to deal with hidden or blatant racism, with effective techniques.

2.5.2. Appropriate lens for this study. By foregrounding the CRT framework, this thesis acknowledges that SOC are a marginalised community and are often targets of hidden racism due to their positionality as the inferior other. CRT has given SOC the opportunity to locate themselves in the seat of power so that they can dismantle inaccurate hegemonic narratives pertaining to their realities. This framework is fundamental to the current study as it centralises and validates SOC's counter-stories of hidden racism as attempts to understand how race and racism continue to dictate the educational and social culture of Stellenbosch University. This framework can assist in exposing racism at Stellenbosch University, and it is hoped, through scholarly engagement, that individuals plagued by racial prejudice can acknowledge these biases and hopefully develop empathy towards the voices of those victimised by their biases. The act of storytelling is a fundamental tool in CRT as it exposes superficial transformative *colour-blind* agendas, ultimately revealing the absolute truth that racism continues to be a problem in our society, especially within higher education (Mhlauli, Salani, & Mokotedi, 2015). The five tenants of CRT will be used in the analysis section, where applicable.

2.6. Conclusion

Chapter 2 described an extensive literature search on the topic of hidden racism, the effects of hidden racism and the coping mechanisms POC utilise to minimise potential impact. In conclusion, White people continue to be evasive to the realities of racism that POC experience daily. This evasiveness to racism leads to Whites, in the context of higher education, nullifying

counter-narratives that speak to experiences of blatant or hidden racism. Although Stellenbosch University has become demographically diverse with 40.1% of students belonging to the minority group (Stellenbosch University, 2017), diversity does not equate to inclusivity nor does it equate to SOC being exempt from racial discrimination. Consequently, the outsiders, SOC, will come across insiders, Whites, who will express hidden messages of inferiority towards them that may wreak havoc in their psyches. The focus of this current study is on these types of hidden racial messages that SOC experience. This chapter has explored the taxonomy of racial microaggressions created by Sue and his team (2007). This taxonomy can assist in identifying other forms of hidden racism unique to the South African context. The theoretical framework, CRT, outlined in this chapter is pertinent in giving SOC a platform to purge and unearth these hidden racist encounters at Stellenbosch University. Through CRT's counter-narrative technique one is able to determine the types of hidden racism SOC face on the daily, the impact of such innocuous atrocities and the coping techniques SOC adopt to offset these soul-wrecking experiences.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive description and rationale of the research methodology that was employed in this research endeavour. A qualitative approach was utilised and considered to be the most appropriate to meet the objectives of this study. CRT's counter-storytelling as a means for collecting data with an interpretative phenomenological (IP) methodological design was deemed the most suitable. CRT's method of counter-storytelling is a valuable methodological tool as it advocates for centralising the voices of SOC at HWIs who are often marginalised. An integration of IP and CRT strengthens the methodological approach and will more effectively address the aims of this study, which is to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences as the racialised 'other'. A thorough description of these methodologies is provided in this chapter. Biographical questions and in-depth semi-structured interviews were employed as data collection methods. A detailed description of these data collection methods as well as the recruitment process is outlined. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was the analytical approach employed to analyse data findings. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion about the ethical considerations and researcher reflexivity pertaining to the research process.

3.2. Qualitative Research Design

In this study design, a qualitative approach to address the given objectives, and research enquiries pertaining to SOC's lived experiences with hidden racism was adopted. Domegan and Fleming (2007) as well as Creswell (2012) aver that qualitative research is the preferred research approach to employ if researchers are interested in understanding human processes and consequently, how they make sense of these processes. A qualitative methodology was the most suitable for this research as its primary objective is to comprehend human behaviour by exploring underlying problems that occur in specific social contexts as well as discovering the meanings, and explanations individuals have for what is occurring around them (Neuman, 2003). This aspect of qualitative methodology was important for the current study, because the experience of hidden racism can be better understood within the social context of Stellenbosch University, which has been identified as a predominantly White middle-class academic environment. As a result, this social-historical context influences the ways in which SOC interpret their racialised experiences and deal with given challenges. A qualitative design is also the most suitable approach to employ, because it permits for multiple, subjective opinions to emerge about the phenomenon. This allows

researchers a wide range of perspectives to understand an individual phenomenon. By focusing on multiple explanations and experiences of hidden racism in a developing country like South Africa, it is possible to broaden comprehension of the topic as well as use the data findings as a point of comparison with studies conducted in other parts of the globe.

3.3. Interpretative Phenomenology

The methodological framework for this research study is interpretative phenomenology (IP). It is concerned with exploring and describing how a specific group of people within a given social context make sense or bring essence to a phenomenon they experience on a quotidian basis (Creswell, 2013; Smith & Osborn, 2007). This methodology strengthens CRT's counter-storytelling, because the former, according to Lester (1999), also centralises individual stories to challenge dominant, often inaccurate, assumptions within society. An interpretative researcher is mostly concerned about the meaning individuals attach to specific events or phenomenon. The interpretative phenomenological researcher views the human being in an optimistic manner by emphasising our "self-interpreting" abilities (Taylor as cited in Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). This implies that human beings are not merely puppets to an objective world. Rather, we are continuously making sense of the happenings that occur in our lived realities. Interpretative phenomenology has its philosophical roots in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and an idiographic inquiry. These three components are outlined below.

Phenomenology. Edmund Husserl first pioneered the method of phenomenology (Finlay, 2011). Husserl's phenomenology focused on exploring and understanding the pure essence or components of what makes a phenomenon and how individuals experience it. He was unconcerned about the interpretations of experiences, and rather sought out a purely descriptive, essentially undistorted and detached, phenomenology where individuals could freely articulate the structures of their experiences as they played out (Dahlberg, Drew, & Nystrom, 2008; Tufford & Newman, 2010). For instance, participants talking about incidents of racism, through this descriptive phenomenology method, are only intended to describe the experience, as it unravelled, without reflecting on why they believe that the incident occurred. In turn, researchers are expected to simply describe, verbatim, the participants' descriptions about the given experience to comprehend the true essence of the phenomenon (Davis, 1995). Husserl believed that it was possible for researchers to attain a purely descriptive phenomenology by bracketing or quarantining all previous judgments and interpretations about the subject matter so that the true essence of an experience can be identified (Finlay, 2011; Luft, 2002; Sherman, 1987; Sokolowski, 1999). This technique is useful

for researchers as it enables them to be more curious and open towards the phenomenon of interest and not to act too quickly or automatically interpret it based on prior judgments (Finlay, 2008). However, a criticism of this technique is that Husserl assumed that, for a better understanding of the essence of things, researchers should remain impartial or isolated from their participants and from their own prior experiences as to not taint the research process (LeVasseur, 2003). He believed that it was possible to study other peoples' experiences without using one's own experiences to understand them. There is great benefit in remaining impartial during research such as permitting the participants' to be experts in their own narratives so that the final research project solely reflects their knowledge about the topic at hand rather than the researchers own biased interpretation of it. However, Dahlberg and colleagues (2008) have emphasised that it is incredibly unrealistic for phenomenological researchers to remain completely impartial during the research process, because it is important for researchers to place themselves in the participants' shoes so that they can understand these subjective experiences. They presented the technique of bridling or "holding back the influence of preunderstanding in order to slow down the process of understanding in a way that allows the phenomenon to be visible" as an alternative to bracketing (Gustin, 2017, p. 3). Bridling offers researchers a means to avoid imparting their prior judgements on the current research by explicitly acknowledging their biases and by being reflective of such influences throughout the research process (Dahlberg et al., 2008). More importantly, bridling permits researchers an opportunity to adopt an open mind-set about the phenomenon as it presents itself while allowing them to engage in a disciplined dialogue with their participants about the research topic, so interpretation occurs at a much slower rate (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Gustin, 2017).

Thus, to conclude this discussion, the descriptive phenomenological aspect of this IP study, attempted to attain a descriptive perception of SOC's experiences with hidden racism at Stellenbosch University. This resulted in 'bridling' instead of 'bracketing' my own prejudgments about the phenomenon so that it could express itself organically. This technique resonated with this research project, because I, as a SOC at Stellenbosch University, harbour certain biases about the experience of hidden racism as I have encountered such incidents while studying and living in Stellenbosch. Therefore, the process of bridling proved efficient as it alerted me to the role my own experiences could play in potentially polluting the data. In doing so, it offered a critically reflective space whereby I was able to question my own pre-judgements about hidden racism in a manner that allowed me to be open to the possibility of hearing a commonality of descriptions, and unexpected narratives. A section on my reflexivity as the researcher is presented later in this chapter.

Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the philosophy of interpretation and it seeks to go beyond the understanding of mere descriptive phenomenon by focusing on the "meanings embedded in

common life practices” (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 728). Thus, it is a deeper exploration of the meanings people attach to certain experiences in the world as well as looking at those seemingly innocuous experiences, which are packed with symbolism, but are often glossed over as unimportant. Heidegger, who developed this theory, advanced the philosophy of hermeneutics by focusing on the way human beings are immersed in the world or the nature of being-in-the-world which he termed *Dasein* (Finlay, 2011). The idea of *Dasein* acknowledges that humans cannot be separated from the world in which they inhabit, because we are always interacting or participating in this world. We are so immersed in the world that Heidegger believed our subjective experiences could not be understood in isolation from the social or cultural context as these elements are “inextricably linked ” (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 729). Thus, to understand one’s ‘being-in-the-world’, IP researchers are subjected to understand the context of these experiences.

This argument holds a lot of merit because, for instance, it is arguably impossible to understand the experience of hidden racism, which SOC encounter, without situating these experiences within South Africa’s prejudiced history and the role Stellenbosch University played in perpetuating racialised rhetoric. It is common knowledge that some of the most prominent apartheid leaders, such as Hendrik Verwoerd and DF Malan, who promoted exclusivity and the oppression of Black bodies were taught at the University. The University’s cultural ethos is still predominately conservative Afrikaans, which presents significant problems for individuals who do not fit or accept this identity. Thus, Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology is about “interpreting and describing human experiences” by keeping in mind the context within which these experiences are embedded as this is important for researchers to understand the interpretations given about the phenomenon being investigated (Reiners, 2012, p. 3).

Hermeneutic phenomenology requires the IP researcher to immerse herself in the shoes of their participants to fully grasp what it must be like for them to encounter the phenomenon of interest (Freeman, 2008; Wertz, 2005). This perspective-taking attitude was continuously adopted during the data and analysis process. Smith and Osborn (2007) assert that a “double hermeneutic” process occurs during IP research as follow: as the participants are trying to interpret their messy lived experiences, the researcher also takes an active role by formulating their own interpretations about the participants’ experiences. The final write-up will be based on the researcher’s own perspective and those of the participants, but it is always anchored on the lived experiences of the participants. As such, the research space is dynamic and demands equal collaboration from both parties to develop a rich and comprehensive insight into the topic of investigation.

Idiographic inquiry. IP’s final theoretical stance is orientated towards an idiographic inquiry that focuses on an in-depth examination of individual cases and subjective responses

regarding the phenomena of interest as opposed to nomothetic modes of inquiry, which is more interested in studying groups or population for probability analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2007). This means that each individual participant, in an idiographic approach, is treated uniquely and thus the researchers can make certain statements about their participants, because they have had detailed access to these individual cases. Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) state that idiographic researchers will proceed to develop a detailed analysis of every single case to find particular accounts in these narratives and then compare cases to find shared or uncommon experiences.

In summary, the IP method combines the theoretical roots of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiographic inquiry to inform its methodology that focuses on individual in-depth description and interpretation of lived experiences. This was well suited for this study as the main objective was concerned with exploring both the essence of hidden racism, as well as the meanings individual SOC attach to these experiences. That is, participants are freely able to describe their experiences without disruption while simultaneously, interpreting these realities for themselves. The researcher also engages in an interpretive process to make sense of the participants' overall racialised experiences.

3.4. Critical Race Counter-Storytelling Methodology

Participants' lived accounts of hidden racism were given through CRT's counter-narrative method. CRT's counter-narrative approach is concerned with foregrounding and reflecting on the lived experiences and interpretations of reality from individuals, especially POC, who are racially and socially ostracised within society (Yosso, 2006). This methodological approach was developed, because CRT theorists have long debated that most human stories have been written and re-counted from a hegemonic Eurocentric or White position (Malagon et al., 2009; Sleeter, 2016; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005). For instance, Black people have historically been, especially in countries like South Africa and the USA with their poignant chauvinistic history, portrayed as the racialised other or the unhuman. CRT methodology allows POC to dispute the White novelist's historic and current representation of their experiences, and identities. Martinez (2014) also suggests that this approach offers POC a means to dissect and scrutinise the notion of a post-racial society or a society where race plays no part in lived experiences. This approach of counter-storytelling illuminates the fact that there are hegemonic transcribed voices which silence those that cry 'racism' and 'inequality' based on race, because in a post-racial society the colour of your skin is completely unnoticed and irrelevant. The counter-storytelling approach also acknowledges that there are voices that have been muted. The silenced voices are given a platform to question those

loud hegemonic voices that have already been heard by narrating the world from their own tone and vantage point.

Yosso (2006) states that the act of counter storytelling is not to merely question the dominant stereotypes of racialised persons, rather it is also an attempt to archive the “persistence of racism” that continues to mark POC (p. 10). By doing so, counter-stories attempt to irradiate to liberal White people their denial and harbouring of modern racism. Counter-stories do not, in any way, discredit or completely dissect the dominant archived stories. Rather, they attempt to offer readers or listeners another way of listening and viewing the world from brand new senses.

Etherington (2004) stipulates that narrative-based research view participants’ stories as a form of knowledge consumption, because the researcher attains first-hand insight into the “social reality of the narrator” (p. 81). The researcher is there to gain in-depth facts about the incomplete disarray and the richness of being human and encountering a specific phenomenon like hidden racism. This approach was regarded as the most applicable to the study because it provided a suitable framework for centralising the voices and hidden racial experiences of SOC at an HWI like Stellenbosch. This way, SOC were able to embody the novelist role and make sense of their everydayness in a world that can otherwise be hostile to their existence. It was only through hearing the spoken unfiltered words from SOC that the researcher was able to comprehend the phenomenon of hidden racism and the consequences of such lived experiences.

In narrative research, considering the participant’s social or cultural context is essential, because ultimately, one’s environment gives meaning to one’s story (Moen, 2006). As such, the researcher is required to consider the external aspects that root participants’ narrations to assess the meaning implicit or explicit in the narration. This process ultimately helped me develop a better understanding of the context, and the meanings participants projected on their experiences at Stellenbosch University.

Another necessary component in narrative methodologies is an active effort by the researcher to engage in an ongoing collaborative dialogue with the narrator or participant (Moen, 2006; Wang & Geale, 2015). The researcher assists the participant in co-constructing or shaping their narrative by frequently asking the participant questions about certain events within the narrative or engaging in validation checks as well as being reflective of their own worldviews in the process (Wang & Geale, 2015). This constant validation or probing of questions is necessary because the researcher is intended to re-story the participants’ narratives in a way that truly reflects their lived experiences. The re-storying involves centralising the participants voiced reality while the researcher also interprets the implicit or explicit meanings behind the narratives (Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2013; Smythe & Murray, 2000). This mirrors IP’s hermeneutic component. Moen (2006) asserts that the interpreting process of narration occurs within a theoretical framework and in

this case, the CRT framework was employed as lens to comprehend, and give meaning to the narratives.

There are at least three types of counter-narratives: personal narratives; other people's narratives; and composite narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Personal stories, as the term indicates, allow participants the opportunity to recite or reflect on their individual experiences with various forms of prejudice (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). This type of counter-storytelling was in line with the aims and interpretative phenomenological methodology of this study - to understand personal or subjective experiences of subtle racism rather than third-person or composite narratives. Thus, the counter-storytelling approach with a focus on personal narratives allowed me to consider different manifestations and interpretations of hidden racism such as how different students perceive hidden racist encounters and how they cope with these experiences to obtain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

3.5. Method of Data Collection

Given that this study is located within a phenomenological framework, to explore the first-person experiences of hidden racism in depth individual interviews were deemed the most suitable data collection method. Gill and co-authors (2008) suggest that individual interviews are suitable when the researcher wants to expand knowledge on an otherwise scarce topic or social phenomenon - subjective, comprehensive responses are necessary and when the nature of the topic under study proves to be too sensitive for focus group discussions. Some participants might benefit from individual interviews, because sharing about perceived hidden racial encounters and the struggle to comprehend the micro nature of it or effective coping methods can be perceived as too intimate to share within a group context.

A semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix A) was used as the research instrument. Semi-structured interviews are efficient as they offer an interactional atmosphere to emerge between the interviewer and interviewee, allowing the interviewer to respond to the interviewee in a sensitive way, as well as offer probes to help cover the desired topics and to elicit complete, and specific responses from the interviewee (Edwards & Holland, 2013). This interview method was suitable for this study as it encouraged participants to describe their experiences of hidden racism in as much detail as possible, elicit their opinions and allow them the expert role in their own understanding of the world. The interview guide helped to capture participants' experiences with hidden racism and the ways in which they cope with specific innocuous racialised events. This way, it gave the participants space to be as organic as possible while they narrated their stories, but also

allowed the researcher to obtain information from the interview that was relevant to the study objectives.

An important component of qualitative interviewing is the development of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee. Rapport can be understood as “the ability to build relationships based on mutual trust and harmony” (Catt, Miller, & Schallenkamp, 2007, p. 369). This enables participants, as well as the researcher, to cultivate a level of comfortability in the interview room, which allows meaningful conversations to occur, that blatantly utters to the other person that one is interested in what is being said. In turn, it minimises the potential anxious feelings that can often arise when strangers are required to bare their souls to one another. Establishing rapport with this group of participants was easy, because prior to conducting the interview and entering the interview room the participants and I had exchanged thoughts about, for example, the busy exam schedule, dating apps, the weather or specific fashion trends expressed on campus. These informal conversations often led to both parties bathing in a sea of laughter. Furthermore, since all participants were off a similar age and racial background to me it was easy to establish a comfortable and collaborative atmosphere where participants felt free to share their narratives. The space between the participants and myself felt safe and in some cases, it almost felt like two familiar souls catching up on the lived experiences of one of us.

A biographic questionnaire (Appendix B) enquiring about aspects such as age, gender, educational and family background was utilised to attain descriptive information about the participants as a means of providing potential readers of this study an aesthetic storyline to follow. A biographic description of each participant is provided in the next chapter to provide more context to their narratives.

3.6. Procedure

The sampling techniques for this study was threefold: purposive, convenience and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used to define the inclusion criteria for interested participants. Purposive sampling can be understood as the deliberate effort to select individuals or a group of people who mirror the qualities relevant for the phenomenon being examined (Welman & Kruger, 1999). This study’s purposive criteria were twofold: (1) self-identify as a SOC, and (2) willingness to discuss their own experiences of being a SOC at an HWI. Participants who met the purposive criteria were approached over email or text messaging and invited to partake in the study.

The second sampling technique, convenience sampling, was deemed idyllic for this research project because it recruits participants who are “easily accessible to the researcher” due to proximity or availability of participants at a specific time (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2). To implement a

convenience sampling technique, a small preliminary study was conducted to test the efficiency of the interview schedule. A pilot study is useful as it can help determine, for instance, which elements in the methodology section are unnecessary; it can provide the researcher with novel ways or ideas to approach the study; ensure the validity of the research questions; and can help test the level of feasibility of the actual study (Thabane et al., 2010). I invited a friend, here after called Ayanda, who matched the inclusion criteria, to partake in the pilot study. Once the interview was completed, which was recorded with a digital recording device and lasted for an hour and 30 minutes, I probed Ayanda about her impression of the interview such as her attitudes towards the questions posed and where I could improve. Ayanda did not provide any negative feedback except that she did not know how to recall experiences of hidden racism as easily as the recalling blatant forms. This just speaks to the ostensibly inoffensive nature of these incidents in that they become so embedded in everyday activities that the line between racism and normality becomes constantly blurred. However, while transcribing this pilot interview, it became apparent that I had certain interview flaws that could be prevented such as waiting for the participant to finish her utterances before interjecting or asking for elaboration. Ayanda's interview was included in the final sample as it provided rich and descriptive data. It would be a great disservice to Ayanda to not include her narrative as she was beautifully candid throughout her interview by sharing extremely personal reflections.

In addition, various student organisations were approached to recruit students as a form of convenience sampling. These organisations were mostly convenient because some of them are primarily concerned with social justice issues within Stellenbosch and it was initially hypothesised that some members would show interest in partaking in this study. However, there was only one response from one of the organisations, but due to adhering to the confidentiality policy of the REC of the University, this organisation will not be named to shield the identity of the participant. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to engage in an unintentional conversation with a student stranger, hereon called Blue, who happened to be walking in the same direction as me for a significant amount of time. We both ended up at the same grocery store and chuckled at the coincidence. The laughter shared between us evolved into a dialogue about African hairstyles and study fields. Upon sharing dialogue about our respective study fields, Blue offered to recruit her partner for the study whom she deemed suitable and we exchanged contact numbers.

Through Blue's kind gesture, the snowball sampling technique of this study was birthed. Snowballing is a non-probability sampling method that involves asking several participants to endorse other individuals who meet the criteria for interviewing (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Blue managed to send her partner's (*Tevin* in this thesis) contact details which was saved onto my mobile phone. Later that day, Tevin was contacted. We agreed on a date, place and a time to meet for the interview. Once the interview was completed, I asked Tevin to endorse other participants whom he

felt might want to contribute their narrative to the study and to contact me if so. Tevin promised to do just that and an hour after our interview, two additional participants requested to volunteer in the study.

All interview data, which ranged from 50 minutes to an hour and 50 minutes, were collected during March/April 2018. In total, there were 12 interviews conducted which were transcribed for analysis. The interviews were conducted in English due to my restrictions in not comprehending other South African languages. This is surely a major limitation to this study and might have greatly diluted some counter-narratives.

The interview guide was not adjusted or refined after the preliminary study since Ayanda did not find any fault with the questions. However, during the first three interviews, I noticed that participants were having a difficult time responding to the question about vivid cases of hidden racism like Ayanda in the pilot interview. This was not due to a lack of understanding the definition, as I had elaborated on the conceptualisation of the term prior to interviewing and the participants were knowledgeable about the phenomenon before volunteering their time to this study. Rather, as stated prior, these hidden frequencies are sadly glossed over as ordinary that participants cannot discern it for themselves. As a result, I felt that it was necessary to refine the questions around hidden racism by adding a supporting question which explored the perceptions participants thought White people held of them. This generated better responses than asking about incidences of hidden racism participants could recall. This question was then supplemented to the interview protocol which can be seen in Appendix A.

Once the interviews were conducted, each audio was subjected to transcription. Half of the interviews were transcribed by me and the other half with the help of a professional transcriber. Firstly, the audio recordings were transcribed, verbatim, without misrepresenting anything said by participants. The recordings that were transcribed by the qualified transcriber, were reviewed to make sure that they upheld participants' actual narratives. To do this, I listened to each recording again in combination with the written text to see similarities and difference, and where applicable I made changes. It should be noted that all identifying or personal information in the final text versions were removed to ensure confidentiality of participants or other parties mentioned. All participants as well as third parties mentioned in the narratives received pseudonyms.

3.7. Data Analysis

The interview transcriptions were subjected to interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Smith and Osborn (2007) contend that the true focus of IPA is to unpack and capture the meanings evident in the data, in a way that fully represents the participants' experiences.

Researchers can obtain these meanings through a long process of engaging with the transcribed interviews and stipulating their own interpretations. During analysis of phenomenological interviews, the researcher takes on an insider perspective by immersing herself in that data to produce her own interpretations and to fully comprehend the social or psychological experiences of the participants (Conrad, 1978). There are no prescriptive or ill-defined steps to follow when employing IPA, however, Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012) as well as Smith and Osborn (2007) provide a flexible guideline one can follow that consist of four primary steps. Initially, the researcher attempts analysis by re-reading and making personal notes based, firstly, on one transcript to look for and establish emerging themes. The second step involves the researcher connecting the emerging themes from the first transcript together and then clustering these themes into concrete categories. Thirdly, the themes of the first analysed transcript are used to help direct analysis of subsequent transcripts and then the researcher constructs a table to present the dominant themes of all the transcripts. Lastly, the double hermeneutics is played out, that is, the researcher's critical interpretations are presented in the written report next to literal examples from the participants' transcribed interviews (Smith & Osborn, 2007; Smith et al., 2009).

The start of the analysis process was relatively easy, because the research questions and the literature review arguably directed the types of themes that I was bound to discover or focus on. For example, having knowledge about what microinvalidations consist of assisted in finding examples of such events in the transcribed data. However, despite these pre-existing themes, an open attitude or bridling was warranted to allow novel categories to emerge in an organic manner. Ayanda's interview was utilised as the template to identify the main emerging themes, because it was extremely detailed and stimulating. I sat with Ayanda's recorded interview and transcript for one week to become familiar with her narrative.

I uploaded the transcribed interview together with the other transcripts onto *Atlas.ti*, which is a computer-based software that "offers support to the researcher during the data analysis process, in which where texts are analysed and interpreted using coding and annotating activities" (Smit, 2002, p. 65). This software aided in managing and organising my transcribed data so that it was easier to pull together common or divergent themes across all 12 interviews. During this time, codes were created based on prior knowledge of the phenomenon, but new codes emerged authentically as the analysis took place. Where necessary, memos were generated to note down the meaning of a specific code or for personal thoughts and ideas. Once this was completed and a thorough understanding of Ayanda's experiences was achieved, the second stage of IPA was conducted by bringing together similar codes or ideas into themes and sub-themes. Due to already having some pre-existing themes identified in the literature, certain codes were categorised into these themes or new themes were developed when applicable. Once the themes from the template text had been

identified, the other transcripts were analysed thoroughly by assigning them to pre-existing themes or developing new codes that did not come-up in Ayanda's transcript. This stage of analysis lasted for three weeks until dominant themes, and sub-themes were identified and thus tabulated (see Chapter 4 for the table).

On completion of analysis, verbatim examples from the written texts that give life to the themes were extracted and are available to read in Chapter 4. This analytical tool was applicable to the current study, because it allowed for a detailed examination of the lived experiences of hidden racism encountered by SOC, how they make sense of this phenomenon and the commonality or divergent interpretations of the phenomenon.

3.8. Reflexivity

Reflexivity, especially within qualitative research, is fundamental in establishing researcher transparency. Although the researcher and participants are considered equals during the data collection process, where the former directs the line of focus and the latter provides necessary information, once this stage of the research is complete the researcher obtains significant control back in how they analyse data and retell the participants' stories (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009). Thus, identification of private worldviews during all stages of the research endeavour is a requirement for reflectivity. This is so that the researcher remains unbiased and represents the participants' narratives in a manner that does not falsify information or give primacy to the researcher's perceptions that could ultimately impact research findings (Fassinger, 2005; Krueger, 1998; Watt, 2007).

Therefore, every effort was made to ensure objective reflexivity. I, as a 25-year-old Black female student living and studying at Stellenbosch, brought specific biases to the current research study. Firstly, prior to commencing this research project, I held a strong belief that SOC, specifically Black students, are victims of hidden racism, and these experiences are exacerbated in predominantly White spaces like Stellenbosch. This was due to encountering horrendous incidents within the Stellenbosch vicinity as well as on-campus that have affected my self-esteem and my ability to interact in White spaces. However, to combat these internal effects, I immersed myself in the literature about the topic of racial microaggressions. Prior to this research, I had no knowledge of what racial microaggressions were let alone that racism could be subtle, because all the experiences I have had up until that point were ostensible and hurtful. This engagement with literature meant that I needed to be open to having my prior thoughts about racism challenged. As the literature search progressed, I had to acknowledge that by being Black, I could never live a life free from racial discrimination, but I could find effective means to cope with these experiences. In

addition, the literature on racial microaggressions gave me the opportunity to reflect on memories that were loaded with offensive racial messages, which before my cognised mind, I thought were praises such as being complimented for speaking English proficiently. The racial microaggression studies conducted by some prominent authors such as Sue and co-authors and the bridling technique discussed earlier, taught me to remain open to hearing diverse encounters of hidden racism that might be different from my own.

Through the bridling method proposed by Dahlberg et al. (2008), I was aware of the role I played in potentially influencing the interview process and the interpretation of the data. Thus, I attempted to create a professional space with the participants as to give them sovereignty to be the experts of their own experiences. However, the participants were extremely friendly with me and it was difficult not to reciprocate, because they viewed me as ‘one of them’. This was due to having a commonality of experiences such as being a SOC, marginalised, youthful and mostly coming from very similar socio-economic backgrounds, which enabled a strong rapport to emerge. Nonetheless, I avoided answering any questions about my own experiences as much as possible as to not modify the participants’ own narrations or to potentially create an atmosphere of argumentation between the participants and myself. As a result of our common experiences, a significant level of trust formed to the extent that the participants did not censor themselves with some offering personal information about their lives or carelessly using vulgar language. Initially, I was apprehensive about interviewing male students, because of the preconceived idea that they would play out a certain level of hegemonic masculinity such as treating me as the subordinate other, which has been shown in some research studies with female researchers paired with male participants (Sallee & Harris, 2011). However, this was not the case at all with my male participants due to them viewing me as an ally, and in some cases as someone whom they respected because of my status as a master’s student.

Throughout the interview process, some of the stories shared greatly affected my identity politics. I found myself starting to become more pro-Black resulting in a sense of heightened self-love that was non-existent prior to this project. However, it soon became apparent that a consequence of this new-found self-love led to a heightened sensitivity to issues concerning race and a distancing of myself from close White friends whom I felt held underlying racial bias. It would be false to say I have worked through these identity politics as it is a process that will take considerable time. However, my participants have taught me that racism does not have to override my emotional and psychological realm.

During the analysis stage, I had to acknowledge that there would be a certain level of subjectivity present concerning matters of racial discrimination, and my lived encounters would shape the analyses process. However, to remain trustworthy, investigator triangulation was

employed. This method, according to Burns and Grove (as cited in Ziyani, King, & Ehlers, 2004), can limit bias as it allows multiple perspectives concerning the data material to be considered and compared. As such, my supervisors were given access to the interview recordings and transcribed data to attain their perspective on the issues being discussed. Their assistance helped to confirm and challenge my initial interpretations, and where necessary changes were made.

3.9. Ethical Consideration

Prior to the commencement of this study, ethical clearance was sought and obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of Stellenbosch University (see Appendix D). Since this study's informants were students at the University, institutional permission from the Division of Institution Research and Planning had to be obtained and was thus acquired. I was attentive about the ethical issues that might be raised by the Research Ethics Committee such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity of participants as well as appropriate counselling referral services.

Upon the initial meeting for the interview, the participants were issued with a written informed consent form (Appendix C) to ensure ethical research. I went over the informed consent form by reiterating the purpose and objectives of the research study. Each participant was informed about their voluntary service in the research: that they had complete sovereignty to withdraw from the research study at any time during the research process and that they could choose not to answer any questions that were deemed uncomfortable for them. Participants were reassured that if they decided to withdraw from the study during the interview process, all research procedures would be halted indefinitely, and their data would be disposed. In addition, participants were also informed about the use of an audio-digital recorder to store evidence of their interview. None of the participants objected to this form of data collection. Once the participants had read the detailed consent document, they were asked if they had any further questions, which were then addressed. After a brief discussion on these ethical matters, the participants and I signed the informed consent protocol. Since all, but two interviews were conducted in the Library discussion rooms, participants were advised about the time constraints of the room, generally two hours, depending on the reservation made.

Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants was a primary concern throughout the research process and the extent of these was discussed with the participants prior to their participation in the research. In terms of anonymity, participants were asked to provide pseudonyms on their written biographic questionnaire to protect their actual identities from public record. However, only three participants opted to create a pseudonym while the other eight were unconcerned about being anonymised. Despite their reluctance to adopt a pseudonym, the

guidelines of the Research Ethics as well as the Division of Institution Research and Planning do stipulate complete anonymity of participants for their own protection. As such, it was mandatory to use pseudonyms for all participants to adhere to the ethical protocol of the University.

To ensure confidentiality, participants were informed, by written (through the consent form) and verbal expression, that their personal information, recorded interviews and transcriptions would be kept securely. Hence, all the recorded interviews were stored onto my personal password-protected computer. I created an encrypted folder, containing all the interview recordings, on my personalised computer and only shared the transcribed recordings with the professional transcriber and my supervisors for assistance with analysis. All third parties were not knowledgeable about the actual identities of the participants as all identifying information was changed. The participants were well-informed about third parties having access to the transcribed data and did not object to this. The written research data (interview transcriptions) were stored on an encrypted file on the personal computer and printed copies were locked in a personal storage cabinet in the designated master's psychology room to prevent unauthorised persons from accessing the data. Participants were reminded that their data, both written and recorded, would be shredded and deleted respectively once the study was completed.

As part of the ethical process, I was obligated to highlight the potential emotional, physical or psychological evils that could distress informants of this study. Due to the sensitive nature of this study, the only potential foreseeable harm in this research was the psychological wellbeing of participants as encountering hidden racist episodes could stir up unwarranted internal chaos during and after their involvement in the study. As such, participants were initially referred to the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) as it is accessible and appropriate for students registered at the University. However, after much examination, the Research Ethics Committee illuminated that the CSCD could prove inaccessible as it is frequently beset with an influx of students utilising their services. Thus, I made alternative provisions for the participants of this study by referring participants to two Black clinical psychologists working in the research unit led by Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. However, none of the participants availed themselves to these services.

After each interview was completed, a debriefing session with the participants was conducted to establish which aspects of the interview were unwarranted and to “undo actual harm or prevent potential harm that may come to the participant” (Turk, 2002). There were two fundamental questions used to debrief participants: Which questions were appropriate and which questions were not? Did you experience any form of discomfort during the interview? All the participants expressed positive sentiments about being part of the study and did not indicate any debilitating emotions caused by recalling their experiences. Rather, all participants were elated and

exchanged thoughts with me about repeating the interview if needed, about the importance of such studies in spaces where POC voices are rendered powerless or conducting a similar study for their own interests.

3.10. Conclusion

This section delved into the research procedures and ethical protocols pertaining to the implementation of this study. The chapter presented the rationale for utilising a qualitative research design for the current study endeavour. The chapter then outlined the two primary approaches in qualitative inquiry used: IPA and the CRT's narrative approach. Qualitative researchers often combine qualitative approaches in order to address various aspects of the research and to achieve the best outcome from the analysis of the results. This is particularly important for research on experiences of hidden racism because one is often dealing with the "myths" that dominate debates on this issue, which are deployed in order to deny and to negate what is real for students of colour.

A study of hidden racism has to examine the actual experiences of participants in a way that offers a counter-narrative to these myths. In addition, the complex dynamics of these experiences often reflect an intersection of the broader social and political context of post-apartheid South Africa, as well as the historical context of apartheid itself. Therefore, the chapter outlined the CRT "counter-storytelling" approach (to provide the counter-narratives) and IPA (to explore the essence of the participants' experiences as well as the broader context surrounding these experiences). In presenting these two approaches of qualitative inquiry in this chapter, I have also discussed the underlying assumptions of each of them, and showed how the two methodologies will enhance each other, and enhance the goals of the study. While the counter-narrative approach, particularly personal stories, enhanced IP's methodology by centralising participants' voices within hegemonic voices, the IP approach allowed for a purely descriptive, interpretative and subjective narration of lived experiences. This chapter also briefly discussed the IP technique of bridling prior judgments about the phenomenon under question as to not influence or contaminate participants' narratives.

In the section on data collection, the chapter described the semi-structured interview framework and gave a summary of how the data were captured, stored and analysed. The forms of capturing data described in the chapter, recording and transcribing the interviews, are forms of capturing data that are particularly salient for a study of this nature conducted at a political time in South Africa when the transformation of university institutional cultures continues to be an issue of critical concern.

The ethical considerations adopted in this study were discussed to illustrate the protocols taken to ensure the safety, confidentiality, anonymity of the participants. The reflexivity component

detailed my involvement in the study such as the extent to which participants solidified my own Black identity and the extent to which they allowed me to ponder about my own experiences at Stellenbosch University. In Chapter 4, the participants' descriptions and results of this study are presented.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The current study was geared at understanding the lived realities of SOC at Stellenbosch University by enquiring about their experiences of hidden racism. The objective was twofold: to identify the types of hidden racism SOC encounter and understand how SOC have coped with such experiences. The term, *hidden racism*, has been used in this study in replace of racial microaggressions, because these verbal or non-verbal behaviours may not be intended aggressively. Rather, a White individual is usually unaware of the gravity his/her action or message may carry thus it remains hidden or inadvertent to them. In most cases, it may not even cross their mind that their behaviour might be construed as being racially biased. This chapter presents the finding from the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the recorded interviews.

Data were collected by means of 12 recorded semi-structured individual interviews which were transcribed, verbatim, for analysis. Interviews lasted approximately between 50 minutes to 100 minutes. The participants were also asked to complete a biographic questionnaire (Appendix B) before the interview to obtain information about their age, race, sex, their year of study, cultural background and place of birth. In the next section, a description of the participants involved in this study is presented followed by the themes and subthemes that emerged from the interview data.

4.2. Description of Participants

The participants of this study were six male and six female students who volunteered their time to share their lived experiences with hidden racism while studying at Stellenbosch University. The age range was from 20 to 27 years old with the most common age being 20 years old. Most participants are from middle-class or lower social economic backgrounds but attended historically White secondary schools. All participants self-identified as a SOC, but also retained their own racial preferences as Black, Coloured or Indian. Most of the participants indicated that English was either their main language of interaction or it is a second language which they are fluent in. All participants acknowledged the persistence of hidden racism around Stellenbosch due to having lived encounters with the phenomenon. Out of the 12 participants, five students have lived in the University's residences but do not do so anymore due to the cultural tension between White students and SOC. Out of the 12 participants, two students live at home. Two of the 12 participants are postgraduates and two participants identified as being international students. Notably, at least five of the South African participants chose to come to Stellenbosch due to being offered a

Recruitment Bursary by the University. Ten interviews were conducted in the University Library's Learning Commons rooms while two participants requested to be interviewed in the comfort of their residences.

The participants were tasked with creating a pseudonym. Only three participants, however, adhered to this. Despite the other participants' unwillingness to remain anonymised, pseudonyms were created to nevertheless protect their identities. As an ice-breaker before pertinent questions, participants were asked biographic questions about their family background and prior secondary school experiences.

The following is a description of the biographic characteristics of each participant with pseudonyms used to protect their identities:

Ayanda. Ayanda is a 23-year-old who is completing her postgraduate degree. She identifies as being Black. Her mother tongue is Sesotho, but she is well versed in isiXhosa, isiZulu and English. When asked about why she came to Stellenbosch she responded by saying "...my mum was the decision... I was thinking I am going to UCT oh my gosh! And then she was like 'no, you are not!'" While being a student here, Ayanda has done various jobs to pay her bills.

Smiley. Smiley is an almost 20-year-old Black student who is originally from a neighbouring country and speaks siSwati. He holds a leadership position in his PSO, as a senior mentor for incoming first-years. When he first arrived at Stellenbosch, Smiley revealed that he felt very anxious especially when he witnessed that, the environment was extremely Afrikaans: "... the buildings were in Afrikaans, our newspaper headlines are in Afrikaans. It's like, "Okay, I'm in a different environment here.""

Tevin. Tevin, a 20-year old law student, identifies as a Coloured individual, and a member of the POC population. He was raised in a close-knit community in the Cape Flats. He only speaks English, but he has adequate comprehension of Afrikaans. Tevin was adamant to come to Stellenbosch as he wanted to stay in one of the male residences here and sought a new environment away from his comfort zone.

Lutha. Lutha is a 22-year-old African male student who became a participant in this study through Person X's assistance. His home language is isiXhosa. Unlike the other participants, Lutha grew up within Stellenbosch in a township called Kayamandi. When asked about his reason for coming to the University, he responded by saying that "*I thought this space is just as mine as much as it is a White person and I should be allowed to exist in this space without being confronted about my race*".

Thando. Thando is a 20-year-old Black social science student who was born in a neighbouring country but grew up in Johannesburg. Her main language is English, but she also speaks Shona. She mentioned that she was not even aware Stellenbosch existed until she came

across the documentary *Luister* which shocked her that racism was still omnipresent in South Africa. She had a lot of social expectations before moving to Stellenbosch such as the possibility of making a racially diverse group of friends, but she sighed heavily “...*that’s what I thought. I was like for once, to experience something different - that didn’t happen.*”

Lenny. This 21-year-old student is completing his final year at Stellenbosch. He is originally from Johannesburg where he stayed in what he calls “*a coloured township area*”. He indicated his main language of communication is English, but he understands Afrikaans. He decided to come to Stellenbosch, because he received the Recruitment bursary. However, he also felt that Stellenbosch offered “*an open campus*” where he would be able to “*walk around and – so you do feel like you’re in a different environment*” something that was not possible if he decided to go to Wits or UCT.

Samantha. Samantha is 20-years-old, and she was recruited by Nelly. She comes from a linguistically multicultural African family who reside in Johannesburg. She decided to come to Stellenbosch because the way the University advertised her desired degree programme was alluring and she felt that the course was a perfect fit for someone like her.

Karina. Karina is a 20-year-old female Indian student in the second year of her humanities degree. Like most participants in this study, she initially expected Stellenbosch to be “... *quite racist. I expected it to be predominantly White and Afrikaans...*” She was also attracted to the University because of obtaining the Recruitment Bursary.

Person X. Person X is a Black, queer identifying 20-year-old Humanities student who was born in the Eastern Cape. His home language is isiXhosa. He moved to a township in Cape Town when he was 8 years old where he lived with his aunt. His first encounter with Stellenbosch was of blatant racism, which he spoke about candidly. He is very vocal about institutional racism and prides himself in disrupting oppressive structures through student movements. He coined the term “*Maraisist*” to refer to the JH Marais statue located on the Rooiplein.

Nelly. Nelly is a 21-year-old social sciences student who is passionate about cultural change on campus. Prior to coming to Stellenbosch, Nelly recalled watching *Luister* and being frightened about possibly going to Stellenbosch where “...*apartheid was designed*” and this made her want to “...*just go to UCT*”. However, upon receiving the Recruitment bursary, she had no choice but to attend Stellenbosch since it was the most economically viable solution.

Malcolm. This 21-year-old male Coloured identifying student is from Paarl which is a rural town located in the Western Cape. He notes that his main language of communication is English. He originally studied engineering at another Western Cape institution of higher learning but changed his career path to study courses within the humanities and economics field at Stellenbosch. When asked about his first perception of Stellenbosch University, Malcolm responded by saying

“...it was a culture shock...” his entire narrative elaborates more on this matter. Like Lenny and Tevin, Malcolm also stayed in a popular male residence on campus, which he described as being white washed and continuously silenced the voices of students who did not fall within the prescribed “norm”.

Mpho. Mpho was the oldest participants interviewed for this project. She is currently a Black 27-years-old female international postgraduate student from a neighbouring country. She comes from a traditional African background and when she first came to Stellenbosch four years ago, she came to the realisation that “...Afrikaans people are also very cultural - it's just that it's just a culture that I'm not used too.” The adjustment from her country to Stellenbosch was not an easy one and she shared with me how emotionally draining it was for her “it was really difficult I went for counselling because I felt I was in a place that promised so much, but I was unhappy most of the time...”

4.3. Themes

The current study identified five core themes that bring to life the narratives of the 12 student participants. There are several subthemes within these major themes which are consequently related to the research question at hand. Table 1 (page 40) provides a summary of the relevant themes and subthemes. As seen in Chapter 2, Sue et al. (2007) proposed a taxonomy of racial microaggression consisting of microinsults, microinvalidations and microassaults. For this thesis, the ‘micro’ element of the term will be replaced with ‘hidden’ to depict, often, unintentional and non-aggressive racially charged moments. Thus, instead of microinsults or microinvalidations, I will use the terms hidden racial insults and invalidations respectively. These themes are further discussed in subsequent sections coupled with extracts from the interviews to exemplify them.

4.3.1. Hidden racial insult. This study has analysed hidden racial insults as messages that student participants immediately identify as offensive remarks made by White people that often leaves them questioning the meaning behind what had been said or the White person’s non-verbal behaviour which makes them feel a sense of worthlessness. Sue et al.’s (2007, p. 274) definition of microinsults, as “communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity, and demean a person’s racial heritage or identity”, was employed to assist in finding examples of narratives which epitomised this theme. This theme is coupled with five subthemes: a) Brown criminals; b) You can’t sit with us; c) Ghosted; d) You don’t have a say, and e) Objectifying black hair.

Table 1

Summary of themes and subthemes

Themes	Subtheme
1. Hidden Racial insult	a) Brown criminal b) You can't sit with us c) Ghosted d) You don't have a say e) Objectifying black hair
2. Hidden Racial invalidation	a) Monolithism of SOC b) Get over it!
3. Alienation from opportunities	
4. Effects of hidden racism	a) Social effects b) Emotional effects c) Academic effects
5. Coping methods	a) Problem-focused coping b) Avoidance-focused coping c) Emotion-focused coping

Brown criminals. All male participants spoke about how walking around Stellenbosch, they feel the negative stereotypes of men of colour (MOC) being propagated when White individuals, particularly White women, clutch their bags or move away from MOC as though they fear something criminal will occur. In discussing an incident where he interpreted the White person's non-verbal actions to reveal her assumption of his deviance, Lutha stated that:

I was walking on Victoria street I was rushing to class and I'd been running for a while and decided you know what I'm tired I'm going to take a fast pace walk and then there was a White girl who was coming across me and as she saw me slow down she started looking

around if there was other people...it was midday so it wasn't late night where you have reason to be suspicious of anyone who is walking in that space - it was broad day light and as soon as she saw me she started looking around. And, when I went closer to her, she started clutching her bag closer to her body as if I would snatch her bag and run away with it, because I had suddenly slowed down when she appeared ... I slowed down because I was tired, and I had decided I wanted to walk the rest of the way to my class and she suddenly clutched her bag as I got closer...but she moved closer to the road which is not safe for her because she thought the Black person coming across was not a safe Black person.

In the excerpts below, Malcolm shares a similar experience and interpretations to Lutha about being perceived as a criminal or as someone to be feared off around campus:

Yeah... there was this one time which I thought to myself wow, "what do you teach your kids white people?" So, we were walking my friends and I... we were on our way out and... there was these two White girls approaching us and as we walked passed them one of them held really tightly on her bag and we looked at each other we were like "did that just happen?"

For Lenny, he shared experiences of coming across White individuals who directly assumed that he was a criminal by asking insensitive questions. For example, he was asked whether he was involved in a gang because of his dress style:

...my roommate...a White Afrikaans student, he was like just telling me that some of the other guys were asking us "do we know gangsters or are we gangsters?"...And then he said that they're scared of us cos we look like you know we're part of a gang or we know gangsters... from the way my friend and I, the way we kind of dressed.

The blatant message in Lenny's story is that gangsterism is associated with criminality and that MOC who dress in a manner that is stereotyped as 'gangster clothing' must be deviant themselves. This theme primarily encompasses the socially construed perceptions or stereotypes of POC, particularly brown-skinned men, being viewed as a potential transgressor or as someone to be frightened of in the public arena.

You can't sit with us. Participants described events during their lecture times where White students would purposefully avoid sitting next to them at all costs. In the below paragraph, Samantha recounts this isolating experience:

...the other day I was late for class and I sat down...I sat next to this White girl and she's in my English Class as well...she moved her bags and she sat on the other side and I was very – obviously, now I'm late, I don't realise what's happening and then I wanted to – I don't know what I wanted to borrow from her. I don't know if it's notes or a pen or whatever. So, I looked to my side and I realised, "What? This girl and her friends have moved further." And I'm just like, "Is it because of me?" is it? So, from that day on, not only was I never late – but also...I would rather move everyone that's sitting there in that row to get to the POC row instead of sitting with someone else [pause]. So, in that moment, I was like, "Ag man, maybe she needed something from her friend" or whatever. But then I realised they were all sitting together and if all of them moved it must have been me and if they always sit there, they're obviously uncomfortable like because they've moving and there's these constant remarks and like these stares and stuff.

Other students also commented on how unwelcoming the lecture halls can be, because of White students' ostensible disinterest to sit next to them. For example, Smiley stated that:

And something that I also noticed is like they [White students] don't really [sit next to us] – ...it seemed like they would like go out of their way to not really sit next to us. We'll be like a last [resort] like literally, only if they're late and then, "Ah, can I sit here? Cool."

Person X's narrative concurs with Smiley's experience:

...came into class, sat in one row and I thought, oh no, it's going to be this Kumbaya rainbow nation things where we all sit in classes - White and Black in South Africa, Kumbaya. And sat in class and literally, the entire row was empty after I sat there. Basically, felt like literally the entire row no people sitting behind me no people sitting like just the area behind, these Afrikaans White men would literally move away.

The participants interpreted the above-mentioned racialised indignities as occurring because of their race, that is, White students evade sitting next to them simply because they are not White. It can be argued that, the incidents in this theme, could be an indicator of non-verbal forms of blatant racism, but it is also plausible that these behaviours are committed unknowingly, by White students, due to being socialised to think in that manner. Also, most participants reported being trapped in a state of confusion and embarrassment (as evident in Samantha's case) when this behaviour occurred, and this sentiment of confusion is a clear indicator of hidden racism as the POC is always

left in the position to consider if they are being looked down upon or not based on their race. In contrast, when a POC encounters direct racism they do not have to ponder twice about it.

Ghosted. When a participant is ‘ghosted’ they experience a sense of invisibility as though they are not there, or their presence does not matter. Specifically, this minor theme illustrates the hidden racial insults where participants experienced feeling ignored by White people who are oblivious to their entire physical being on campus such as in the lecture halls and other areas within the campus vicinity. For example, Karina shared an experience while hanging around on campus with two of her friends when she was ‘ghosted’:

...there was one instance where a friend and I, she’s Black and I’m Indian and we were talking to one of my Afrikaans friends. He’s from DF Malan and a few of his friends from school – so were outside a building talking after a lecture, having a good time. And then some of his friends, a couple of girls from his school came to talk to him and flat out, ignored our existence in the most blatant – it was, I don’t know if they didn’t – if they don’t even realise that they’re doing it. And my friend, she like looked at this girl and she was like, “I’m here.” Nothing. It was the weirdest experience I’ve ever had. It was – it’s like I had an invisibility cloak on. It was very, very strange.

Other students resonated with Karina’s narrative. In the below extract, Person X describes his first encounter with White Stellenbosch three years ago when he was blatantly ignored by a White receptionist at a designated University student apartment. However, as soon as his aunt, who Person X described as “White-passing”, approached the counter, the White receptionist suddenly paid attention:

So, my first experience at Stellenbosch...my aunt is White passing, she’s Coloured...and so now I go to this tannie [Afrikaans word for aunt or used in colloquial language by young people to denote an old lady], this house mother who assisted at my [residence hall] and then I ask her, “So where is the Olympus Hakka House because I am supposed to go for Open Week there?” and she doesn’t respond. She literally ignores me and carries on with whatever she’s doing. Ignores and does not acknowledge the presence of an individual in her space. And I’m like, “Sorry again, do you perhaps know where – can you please give me the directions to Olympus Hakka House?” And then she ignores me again and my aunt is watching all of this and then it took my aunt to literally walk to this lady and be like, “Hey, he asked you questions.” And she’s like, “Oh no, I’m sorry I didn’t hear anything.” And

then my aunt is like, “Didn’t you hear anything or was his skin not speaking too loudly to you?”

Person X went on to share that this first encounter with Stellenbosch created a sense of weariness around White bodies. In addition, he provided other numerous experiences with the White receptionist which were often blatant forms of racism. Ayanda’s melanin skin was also not “*speaking too loudly*” for the White people she frequently had to face. In the following quotation, she recalls her ‘ghosted’ experience with her White roommate’s father who visited her at their University residence, but never acknowledged Ayanda’s being:

...her dad never spoke to me and I was like “ha! You don’t like Black people”. He would walk in...no eye-contact... I think he doesn’t like Black people that’s the impression that I got...the fact that he is not coming to greet me or to acknowledge me from that side of the room just means he doesn’t like me, because he did that the whole year.

Like Ayanda, Malcolm shared his experience while living at a male residence on campus. In his narrative, Malcom talks about several situations where he was a victim of the ‘ghosted’ hidden racial slight:

I would shower with this guy and he won’t even look in my direction. I’m literally showering, taking a whole shower and this guy will just stand there. He won’t look in my direction but then his White mate comes in and then he’s happy. This guy just starts talking. Then they just start talking. Then, for example, I’d laugh about, let’s say they make a joke then I’d laugh you know, then they’d recognise me, like, “Oh, you’re here.” I’m like, “Yeah, just don’t see me.” Also, there was this one guy, Matt. He was friends with Mike in first year. Mike was my roommate. He’d open the door, look into the room, see Mike’s not there, look me in my face, won’t say anything, close the door and he’ll walk away.

This ‘*Ghosted*’ experience left participants feeling perplexed and flabbergasted, because of the ostensible non-verbal dehumanisation they received. The similarity of these stories infers that White people in Stellenbosch have been programmed to nullify the humanness of Blackness which is experienced by participants as incredibly alienating. In all these stories, the hidden message illuminated is that the SOC’s existence is irrelevant as though they, like Karina stated, are wearing an “*invisibility cloak*”. All participants concluded that this theme occurred because they were minority students. This theme was perhaps the most potent due to it endorsing feelings of worthlessness or non-belonging for participants.

You don't have a say. The experience of being invisibility was not only done by ghosting the SOC entirely, but it was also seen in the ways in which White individuals, especially students, minimised SOC's academic and cultural contributions within the class or social scene. In the below examples, two participants recall events where they felt their intellectual capacities was questioned or not considered during class discussions:

In Mpho's case, she was excluded from partaking in the group's discussion because they were speaking Afrikaans and they simply just informed her on what work she should do:

One time I was in a group. We were working in a group of three. And I had my two group mates speaking Afrikaans over my head...if we should do work together and you speak in a language that excludes me then it's underground racial discrimination. They do speak English so why not cos I also stutter when I speak English where I am failing, you know? But, they would speak over my head in Afrikaans and I would just write what I need to write or do what I need to do and then give my part of the assignment.

Thando shares in a similar experience where she was left feeling as though her opinion was unimportant as well as feeling marginalised because of being the only SOC in her group:

Okay, like there was this one time where we had like a group where the lecturer was like, "You can quickly get into groups and discuss this topic." And obviously the majority of the people are White, and, in my group, I was the only Black person. So, while we were talking about a certain issue, I had something that I wanted to say... and no-one considered what I said. I was very confused, why no-one considered what I said. It was important but they just you know, put it to the side and then they carried on discussing what they wanted to discuss.

The experience in both the abovementioned narratives communicated the hidden message that their intellect is not of value nor do the White students view them as worthy academic contenders. The second message apparent in Mpho's and Thando's experience is that they are not welcomed in that space. Both female students felt alienated and excluded because they were the only SOC in their group, thus rendering their voices powerless.

This subtheme also brings to light how White students and ultimately the University's ethos easily disregards the cultural interests of SOC. In almost all the interviews, participants brought attention to the one-sided culture of Stellenbosch as one that glorifies the Afrikaner tradition especially when it comes to student celebrations. All participants spoke about how their music interests or the music mostly listened to by a Black audience such as African rap, house music, hip-

hop or Kwaito is negated in White spaces as though their socio-cultural preferences are not as important. Thando recalls an event during the University's welcoming programme where Black musical tastes were dismissed because it did not favour the White majority:

So, during that time obviously, White people would play their music and we'd listen to their music and everyone listened... And then one time, there was one White girl, she just had the mic and she's also a mentor and I was playing my music, right... It was a South African rapper song I remember, and all the Black people were singing along to the song and then the girl who had the speaker was like, "Please stop playing this. No-one wants to listen to this, Thando." And...then all the Black people who were in front like "we are listening!"

Ayanda was also candid about an encounter that led her to believe that the cultural interests of Afrikaans students are more recognised than those of SOC:

P came to us cos he is the organizer for events for us to get to know each other as an honours group. And he wanted to organize a night where we have karaoke but some of the girls were like "no they don't like the idea" we [Black students] were like "which girls? because we fine with that." "Clearly, the girls that you [P] see as superior said no which are the Afrikaans girls" He didn't ask us he asked the Afrikaans girls if that's what they'd want to do and they said "no" and then he just decided that "no then".

Lenny shares a similar event that occurred at his male residence:

Like they play music in the quad where everyone is listening to it, always Afrikaans music that everyone listens to. And the one week...they asked my friend and I to put a playlist on. So, we put on rap music cos that's what we enjoy and like within three minutes, the song didn't even play like complete and then someone came up to change it because they said no, "we don't listen to this".

All students interpreted the experiences in this subtheme to be loaded with racial undertones. The message in these narratives is clear: "we" refers to the insiders of the Stellenbosch island while outsiders are rendered invisible, and their thoughts are permanently set-aside. The White insiders in all three stories dismissed the socio-cultural contributions of the participants, because in their minds, it did not serve the interests of their White affiliation and since Whiteness holds capital their voices reign supreme when it comes to the culture of the University.

Objectifying black hair. This subtheme was illuminated in interviews with some Black female participants and presents hidden racial insults directed at their physical aesthetics, particularly their hairstyles. This was something they frequently encountered around campus. In most cases, White people remain oddly curious about Black hairstyles often showing insensitivity which makes the recipient mostly uncomfortable with such questions as it is intrusive of their personal space. In most of these narratives, the hidden message communicated to the female participants is that Black women are public objects of fascination, because their hair deviates from the Western norm. However, within this general message, other hidden messages were also generated.

For example, Thando's experience communicated the message that her hair is unclean: *"Do you wash your braids?" I've been asked that. "Yes, I have." "Have you washed your braids, like how many times do you wash it? Are they clean?" So, imagine getting questions like that? For Samantha, getting asked about how she does her hair exhausts her: "So, there's been a lot of things of people being interested like it's like, "So how do you do your hair?" you know, kind of thing and it's also a bit of a problem to always explain no cornrows are... I do it because it's neater and I do it because it's so much easier to maintain those kinds of things. In Mpho's case, she encountered a White stranger who invaded her body by touching her hair without her permission communicating the hidden message that the Black female body is not self-owned thus can be fiddled with at any point in time: ...this white girl came and asked me where, where did I get my hair done and she loves it I told her, you know what "don't touch my hair" She touched it and I told her "don't touch my hair!"*

4.3.2. Hidden racial invalidation. This dominant theme was mostly identified by SOC through verbal messages that exposed White people's diminished interest in comprehending their racialised realities. Two hidden racial invalidations were frequently mentioned in the current data set: a) Monolithism of SOC, and b) Get over it.

Monolithism of SOC. Most participants spoke about hidden racial invalidations that involved White people often feeding into the stereotype of POC as speaking in a way that is indicative of their racial identity. In most cases, these narratives show how easily some White individuals can reduce POC to a single or monolithic category ignoring their individual experiences. For instance, participants reported that they are often lauded for speaking 'proper' English. In some cases, this invalidation was frequently accompanied by curiosity around their previous education or social background, because POC who sound 'White' are perceived as coming from more affluent

homes. For example, as an international student, Smiley has encountered White people who are flabbergasted at his accent with the hidden message that someone who is from his country is expected to speak English in a particular way, often in a manner that is less distinct or proficient than that of English-speaking White people:

...like I've had a person sit next to me and then just be like, "Oh wow, I like your accent. Like you don't have a Black accent. That's really, really cool. Like you must have gone to a really good school ...They'll be like "Oh, where you're from?" And I'll be, "From [African country]." They'll be like, "Oh, really? You're from [country]? But you speak like this?". ...they'll be like, "I don't know, you just sound like, you sound a bit white." Or, "You sound like you're British-ish."

Other participants shared similar sentiments to Smiley:

Nelly: So usually a lot of White people have preconceived notions about me and so usually, when I talk it's like, "Oh okay... so she speaks proper English".

Person X: uhm...in white spaces where people don't know about my activist history in Stellenbosch. They're like, "Oh no, you speak so well. And when you tell them, "Oh no, Fam, I'm from e-Gugulethu" they're like, "But then you speak so well."

Karina: I often get, "Wow, you sound so white."

Samantha: "Wow, you speak very well" and I'm like, "Thanks." "What school did you go to?" - they just become very interested in where you come from when they hear you speak.

This invalidation, often intended as a compliment by the White person, was often received by the participant as peculiar and they were often left unable to make sense of what is meant by it. In contrast, some participants also reported that White individuals on campus sometimes pathologise their way of speaking English:

Person X: ...they'd start commenting on "Oh no, have you heard how this person pronounces this word?" I'm like, "...Do you know how to pronounce my name first?"

Nelly: ...people will make fun of how I pronounced a word or whatever and then, it's like, "Nah, bra, take the time to learn my language. Can we start there?"

The underlying message that is apparent in this subtheme and was interpreted by participants is that, there is a stereotypical or normative way as to how POC speak and this normative way is usually not 'proper' English. Secondly, the elusive message conveyed by some White people when they correct how POC pronounce certain words or when they find their pronunciations humorous is that some POC are deficient in speaking English even though most White South Africans rarely make an effort to learn the other nine official South African languages.

Get over it. This subtheme represents hidden racial comments that have been interpreted as a means for White individuals to invalidate the racialised realities of SOC by, in most cases, silencing SOC when they bring up racial and/or political dialogue in social or academic settings. In a social scene, Thando shares:

The one White girl, I spoke to her about how Stellenbosch is racist. And she felt like "We keep putting race as an issue. We keep like holding to race and like none of these problems will get solved and stuff."

This encounter communicated to Thando that her experience as a minority student in Stellenbosch and being a victim of racism is a trivial issue that shouldn't be broadcasted.

As someone who is extremely vocal in academic and social contexts, Person X shares his dilemma in academic settings when he wants to speak about race:

I'd be in a class...when I raise my hand it's always like, "Oh no, you're going to say people are racist." Or, "Person X, no, not everything is about racism." I'm like, "What then? I'm not going to say anything about that and even if I do that's my experience in this space."

Similarly, both Nelly and Samantha recall experiences in class of being confronted by White male students for bringing up the topic of race. For Samantha, she was called a racist by a White male student and reprimanded by other White students for critically engaging with the literature due to highlighting the problems with Eurocentric knowledge:

I was told I'm being racist and I tried to explain that, "I'm not trying to be racist. I'm trying to ask "why are you only teaching us European history, when we're Africans and we need to

know African history?” And he started attacking me, “You’re such a racist.” And they were like, “No, why do you have to ask such questions?”

Nelly mentioned a similar incident in her class where a White male student was uncomfortable with the conversations she was having about race and White privilege:

But, I remember very well I was asking a question in one of my classes and I remember him saying...like he raised his hands fully and he’s like, “You don't have to be a Black activist all the time and half of the time the points you make are stupid and irrelevant.”

Naledi interpreted this experience to be racially charged, because she believed that the White male student reacted that way, because he had a problem with “*who [was] saying it and not what [was] being said*”. In both Samantha and Nelly’s experiences, their voices were invalidated by White male students, because they challenged the status quo and by doing so potentially threaten White male domination. Nonetheless, these experiences all carry the message that SOC should ‘get over’ racial prejudice.

4.3.4. Alienation from opportunities. This theme mainly describes racial experiences that were engineered to exclude participants from social, work or academic opportunities at the University. In terms of the academic context, the language policy of Afrikaans being the main mode of communication is perhaps the biggest driving force to exclusion as it dictates a student’s overall university experience. Currently, the University has the 50/50 language policy where lectures are required to teach in both English or Afrikaans sometimes, with the help of a translator. However, this can prove to be a challenge sometimes especially when Afrikaans lectures and students get comfortable speaking their mother tongue. Below, three participants recall events where they felt excluded in class because they did not understand the language:

...Our class was very small so, we would sit in a round table and then have a discussion and we’d have first language Afrikaans speakers speak Afrikaans because that’s what they prefer to speak that, and it was annoying and frustrating. [Mpho]

My History ...lecturer, he often just switches [between English and Afrikaans] Sometimes, he’ll say a joke in Afrikaans which already, even if it’s a joke, it’s already excluded a lot of us that don’t speak Afrikaans. [Samantha]

...It happens a lot where Afrikaans speaking students speak Afrikaans ask things in Afrikaans in class and they are responded to in Afrikaans and then you didn't even get the question you don't know what the response is like and what was it about and how it could help you that happens a lot. [Lutha]

In terms of work opportunities, some participants work for the University as mentors or are required to do field work for their required degree, but shared examples where they often felt like White individuals in seniority positions deny them further growth due to their skin colour but offer these opportunities to White students. For example, she describes being excluded from earning more money during field work for her postgraduate course:

Miss Anna is our lecturer but she...I didn't experience any subtle racism with her in class but like experienced it when she was doing field work with us and then like field work they were paying me R70 per hour so that's a lot. So, we found that she was giving more of the White kids the longer shifts...the night shifts that pays more...

Thando describes a similar scenario where it was ostensibly clear how Black students are perceived even though they were on par with White students. In her interview, she describes being instructed to do work during her mentorship services that was more laborious while White mentors, some who were also only newly employed and expected to do this job, were given easier tasks:

...during that time [orientation programme] a lot of things like assignments and things that we had to do were given the most – like our head mentor, she would assign the Black people to do the labour things where you had to like to pick up stuff or cleaning stuff... And thing [s] that didn't require much labour, she would give it to the White people or she wouldn't even give them anything to do. So, I didn't understand that and I was like, "Why are you telling me to do this? But you didn't tell, even second years' com? Like second years' com, is there to do these things but you're telling me as a mentor to pick up rubbish?"

The hidden message communicated to Thando and Ayanda is that they, as Black individuals, are half as worthy for better work opportunities than their White counterparts with the same or different level of experience.

In terms of the social context, participants reported that the University and the town's attachment to Afrikaans acted as a weapon to execute their sense of segregation from the University culture. Most of the participants spoke about how White Afrikaans individuals perpetuate linguistic

discrimination by their reluctance to speak English even in spaces where Afrikaans is deemed unnecessary. Smiley stated that he often encounters problems with the group of first year students he mentors:

I can tell now with the mentors that I'm working with that I'm supposed to lead right now, the majority of them speak Afrikaans. Like, we'd be having a conversation right now and then as soon as one person says something in Afrikaans like then [they] go change their language to Afrikaans and then they exclude some of us...and I'm like "...can we speak English?" like some of them took offence to that. It was like, "Oh wait, why are you making it seem like we can't speak our language?" I'm like, "No, I love your language, that's great but like we don't want to exclude anyone. Like English, everyone knows English".

The message communicated to Smiley, by the White-Afrikaans students purposefully speaking Afrikaans even when told that they are alienating other students from the narrative, is that they do not respect his authority and are not prepared to let go of their linguistic superiority for an outsider. Other students mirrored Smiley's narrative and shared their experiences during meetings in their residence or mentorship programme where Afrikaans students purposefully dismiss the existence of other linguistic bodies:

So, my mentor was very Afrikaans and she tried to speak English and I'd listen. The minute she speaks Afrikaans I'd go on my phone and then she gets upset "why you going on your phone?" and I'm like "I can't hear you what's the point of me not going on my phone if you not going to speak the language I understand?" [Ayanda]

We have this thing highlight, lowlight - you'll tell them about what your highlight and your lowlight of the week. So, I'll come to the Section Meeting excited. But, the entire meeting, they'll come in a circle and the whole circle will speak Afrikaans and I wouldn't know what they are saying. [Samantha]

In house meetings they [students] speak Afrikaans, or they'd ask questions in Afrikaans or answer in Afrikaans and that excludes people from the story. [Tevin]

In the below extracts, some students also describe how they have been alienated from taking part in social-cultural activities as a result of Afrikaans being the prerequisite to partake and enjoy these activities:

I joined the Drama Society and when I went to the Drama Society, the lady just spoke in Afrikaans and I told her that I don't understand Afrikaans and everyone knew Afrikaans except for me. So, I told her I don't understand Afrikaans and she said she can't speak English very well. But, I was just like "I'm not going back". [Thando]

I'm very big on drama and I want to direct something this year. But, I can't... like I went to the Toneelvees [Public Afrikaans Arts event] last year and a lot of the plays were in Afrikaans, that also excludes me cos I'm interested. These are spaces that I want to be in, but you've [Afrikaans individuals] excluded me by speaking something that I can't understand. [Samantha]

The message interpreted by students in these stories of exclusion is that Afrikaans speaking individuals will not go the extra mile to accommodate students who do not speak their language, nor do they think it is necessary. These encounters exclude SOC from partaking in socio-cultural activities on campus, being aware of important updates during house meetings or increasing their social circles due to not being included in discussions

4.3.4. Effects of hidden racism. One of the objectives of this study was to find out the effects of hidden racism that participants have experienced. Most of the participants were extremely open about the troubles they have witnessed as a result of being privy to hidden racism. The interview analysis highlighted three effects that participants encounter: a) social effects, b) emotional effects, and c) academic effects.

Social effects. The experience of hidden racism has affected the ways in which SOC interact socially. As a result, most participants were honest in their response to admit that they often do not attempt to or are very reluctant to make friends with White individuals:

Person X: So, this condescending approach from whiteness, has caused me in terms of socially I try to have as minimum interaction with White individuals at Stellenbosch as possible.

Smiley: Okay, most of my friends are Black or Coloured and that's it like White people... they're not really my friends.

Karina: It definitely makes it harder for me to make Afrikaans friends.

For some participants, this is often because they do not know how or what to talk to White people about. For instance, Tevin explains how he prefers to be among other POC rather than White people whom he often finds talk about things he cannot relate to:

People of colour just make me feel more comfortable if anything. We'd talk about the same things. To some extent, the background we had is similar. So, I don't have many White friends... I have enough friends. No offence to them [Whites].

Other participants echoed and supplemented Tevin's view by mentioning that they do not to want to filter themselves around White people by what they say or how they behave thus, find themselves mostly surrounded by other POC:

Nelly: And I will say most of my friends are Black because for me, I'm a very unpolished person when I speak. Like, I really just say what's on my mind and sometimes that makes other people uncomfortable.

Thando: Yeah and I think that's why I don't have any White friends, yeah because I can't keep quiet about certain things just to make them feel comfortable.

Ayanda: I'm not friendly towards White people ... I've found it really difficult to talk to White people because of it I'm just like "what are we gonna talk about?"

Malcolm: I'm reluctant to make friends with White people, because my experience thus far every time I make friends when it comes to a really touchy subject then their true colours come out.

For some participants, socially isolating themselves from attending or visiting social spaces such as Catwalk or Tinroof, which are clubs with a majority White presence, was an effect of hidden racism. For some of the participants, avoiding such spaces helped them evade cumulative racialised memories. Most participants reported that they would attend clubs that catered to their needs such as Entourage, which is viewed as a SOC night club:

Mpho: I try to remove myself from it and I know I won't go to the like going out to clubs I won't go to...Catwalk cos they do they don't let Black people in...

Tevin: *Why would I want to go there [Tinroof] and dance to like sokkie music or Afrikaner music out loud, I don't need that. I go to Entourage, which is predominantly a Black and a Coloured club. So, there's very minimal White interaction.*

Ayanda: *I just excluded myself from everything. I stopped going to house meetings [at her residence] ...I basically just had a place to sleep because I just that's what I do when I experience negative energy I'm like "...sorry... I'm not gonna participant in that environment"*

Emotional effects. Participants were asked whether their cumulative encounters with hidden racism created any sense of emotional trauma within them. As such, this subtheme discloses the overall emotional effects that participants have experienced due to frequent exposure of hidden racism as well as being within a space that oppresses their sense of being. In many cases, a handful of participants reported having trouble negotiating whether to nurture their real self, their Black spirit, or to assimilate to the White standard as a way of minimising hidden racial occurrences. Samantha shares how studying at Stellenbosch and being racially victimised has created an identity crisis within her:

I currently have been grappling a lot with a lot of identity politics. So, I've been between a very hard rock and a hard place where it's like, who am I? Where do I fit in? What must I do to fit in? And why am I excluded in the first place? Why do I need to feel like I need to fit into something? Surely, you should just get into a space and already feel like I belong. But coming here you're like, "Ag man, I'll have to work hard to get to those, you know, that point."

Smiley mirrors Samantha's views about questioning his sense of belonging whereby he is faced with the dilemma of either committing to his true self or denying himself to embody a White persona in order to make White individuals feel more comfortable with him:

I feel like the greatest challenge is trying to balance, making White people feel comfortable and then not losing your identity because I realise it's very easy to lose your identity here... There is a lot of internal fighting that you do if you're a Black person and you're in these spaces...I need to bring my whiteness, like try you know, get it somewhere, like unlock it. So, I can really feel like I'm enjoying the environment that I'm in and I won't physically show that I am uncomfortable or disinterested... they have to identify or see white in me for them to feel comfortable enough to sit next to me or approach me.

In the below extract, Nelly takes us through the internal process she faced when she received a hidden racial insult directed at her communication style from a White male student in her class. Seeing that she was causing some uneasiness among her White peers with her political and social views about racism, she speaks about how she silenced her inner voice for a period of time so that she could accommodate those around her:

He told me that, “Oh, you need to behave in a particular kind of way in order to not receive backlash.” So, for...a long time, I remember diminishing myself in class especially – diminishing myself because I was tired of the vitriolic comments and all the vile sort of energy that was always directed at me. So, for a while, I diminished myself. I did – I went back into, “Okay, don’t do this. Don’t think this because what you will receive in return isn’t desirable.”

In Lenny’s interview, he spoke about the disguise he has had to wear while staying at a male residence or when he is required to attend predominately White socials. For him, the disguise he takes on is a way to break the tension that occurs when he interacts with White people. Unfortunately, this comes at the cost of rendering his authentic self inferior to the Whites’ interests or diminishing himself as Nelly described earlier just so that they can view him as a person to be respected. This is similar to what Smiley mentioned as “*they have to identify White in me*” in order to view a POC as an equal:

I almost feel like I’m putting on a mask when I’m in those spaces...And only after like assimilating, so only after you go to the rugby games with them, if you like form part of their culture...And only after I did that I realised that then you kind of fall into their favour and maybe they listen to you and that or respect you a bit more...But, it’s not really like authentic to me...It requires you to kind of put on this mask so that you break that first barrier with them... I just find it easier and if you can speak like them, talk like them, move like them then it’s easier...Sometimes I see it as a means to an end, kind of me just trying to get my job done.

For other participants, the emotional effect manifested as depressive symptoms or an overwhelming sense of loneliness due to being in a racially charged environment:

Person X: *Guys, like I've gotten to a point of feeling numb in Stellenbosch, because navigating this space is [like] a skeleton or as a hollow person... And got into a very depressive state due to... a lot that was happening.*

Mpho: *...2015 it was very it was very difficult for me... I went for counselling because I was unhappy most of the time and people don't understand when you say to them "I'm not happy". It's frustrating it's sad it's a lonely place.*

For Lutha, continued exposure to blatant and hidden forms of racism around Stellenbosch triggered past memories of subordination which sometimes affects his sleep patterns:

... but the mental pain doesn't really go away. You'll be calm for a day and all of a sudden you wake up at night and you'll find your thinking about something that didn't happen yesterday or the day before, but it happened so many years ago and it's there and if it's night time you are in trouble because you struggle with going back to sleep because it's a trauma that you still live with.

Academic. One of the interview questions was aimed at exploring whether participants felt that their academic potential was jeopardised in any way due to encountering hidden racial attacks. Lutha's compelling narrative beautifully epitomises the academic consequences some students might encounter when they have been impacted by White people's hidden racial biases:

... it affects how much you can you know how much of your brain you use to think about your academics whilst you are also thinking about classmates just being ignorant about the world outside their bubble and practicing their microaggression and mostly their privilege on you...your brain goes to thinking about that and you know it doesn't focus on your academics you struggle just doing a reading and understanding what's in the reading ...4 hours later you haven't read a page and your mind wanders and it doesn't get to the content you have to understand because your brain blocks out every information that you have to take in because in your brain is already the information that shouldn't be there which is violence being practiced on you micro-aggressively.

The academic curriculum also presents a challenge for many participants of this study who often argued that the curriculum is engineered in a manner that privileges Afrikaans students such as through the language policy in doing so mutes African knowledge through the type of academic

material students are forced to read. For instance, Ayanda speaks about how she avoided taking some post-graduate subjects, even though it was an initial plan of her to further her learning, because the course framework indicated that it would be in Afrikaans. She stated that “*this year I thought that road transport is gonna be in Afrikaans I got told that it was gonna be in Afrikaans and then I didn’t take it.*” Ayanda continued to speak about her views on the language policy and how it has been influencing her academics by stating that:

I definitely think it has an impact on your marks the Afrikaans thing the translator...cos you don’t get it first-hand...I didn’t enjoy that and my marks also decreased cos first semester was in English and then second was just in Afrikaans nah I didn’t understand it like it’s the same subject same lecturer...

As seen in Ayanda’s case, the language policy which is aggressively exclusive can hinder some students’ academic plans, especially those who do not comprehend Afrikaans at a tertiary level because it puts them at a disadvantage. For Person X, the White academic curriculum still remains the biggest obstacle to reaching his academic potential. In the following paragraph, Person X openly explains how his own hidden racial encounters have affected his academics significantly to the extent that he has had to deregister from a desired course:

...yeah, it affects my academics. You literally, in terms of going to class, you have 10% chance of making it because course outline is not there for you as a Black individual. The way the lecturer would teach you would be in a fuckie way that is not there to uplift you as a Black individual but there to oppress you even more...not wanting to go to class not feeling like it’s worth it going to class because you’re going through the same things where you have to explain your blackness to a White individual all the time or you have to have these White ideas shoved upon you and you have to literally go into your exams and regurgitate that and if you decide to not, like to deviate from the entire thing that you learnt in your course framework, you will not get a good mark. Because, I did Economics first and second year so when I start deviating and be like, but then here are other theories... I’d see my mark and...I had to change degrees last year because of having to deal with...lecturers who were not even supportive.

4.3.5. Coping with hidden racism. Another primary goal of this study was to elicit responses from participants about the types of coping methods they may employ as a shield against

perceived hidden racism. The data suggests that participants use a combination of *problem, avoidance and emotion* focused techniques to cope with hidden racism.

Problem-focused coping. There were not many examples of intentional problem-focused tactics, but the current data illustrate that some SOC engage in two problem-focused strategies after possible hidden racial encounters ascend: a) Challenging offenders by reporting the incident to authority figures, and b) Educating others about racism.

Reporting incidents to authority figures. Some participants opt to challenge White people who hold biased views of them by reporting perpetrators to authority figures such as lecturers or student discipline structures. For instance, Malcolm shared an encounter he had with a White male student, hereon called Markus, at his residence who blurted out ghastly remarks about SOC during the student protests, calling them stupid for blocking access to the Library and labelling Malcolm a monkey for no particular reason. Markus, after realising his mistake, attempted to apologise to Malcolm the next day.

In the below extract, Malcolm shares his response to Markus' apology as well as his problem-focused technique by taking the matter further to the University's discipline department:

...he starts apologising, saying he's sorry for what happened, starts crying hysterically in my room...he's apologising saying, his father is racist, and he was raised in this manner. And I told him, "Look fair, I'll accept your apology, I'll shake your hand but I'm not gonna let this slide. I don't have anything against you, but you did something very, very horribly wrong. You need to face the consequences of that." So anyway, I went to the Equality Unit, laid the claim, they called him in. He accepted all charges against him.

Similarly, Lutha also shared that he is never afraid of challenging White perpetrators by enlisting the aid of University authority:

...So, I take these things [racial incidences] up to lecturers you know, so they know that you know there's certain people who hold certain beliefs and are discriminating against people of colour.

Educating others about racism. Some participants argued that educating White people, whether it be their friends or those who are far removed from them, offered a better means of coping.

Karina: I mean I try and educate them and try and learn from them as well.

For Person X, educating came in the form of not only through academic forms, but also through challenging the notion of Stellenbosch a space for only White bodies by planning demonstrations on campus that represented Black interests:

Started being very active on campus, active with Open Stellenbosch with educating resident students about rape culture about racism, about a lot of things. We would like literally rock-up on the Rooiplein playing black music and people are dancing ...play games from our childhood, skipping whatever on the Rooiplein... Washing clothes, hanging them, like Stellenbosch looked like a township...It was a proper disruption.

Avoidance-focused coping. In most cases, all participants shared that they would habitually ignore or brush away hidden racial behaviour to protect themselves from cumulative damage by evading confrontation with perpetrators or certain social settings they felt was occupied by far too many White faces:

Ayanda: I just avoid it that's how I survive.

Lutha: ...there's just days you don't wanna confront it. Whiteness. You just wanna you know live, resist and be free with who you are.

Smiley: like for me I think that's just my nature and I tend to brush a lot of things off.

Tevin: I just let it go... I just let them go.

Thando: How do I cope? I think I just ignore it now. I don't think about it.

Emotion-focused coping. This subtheme consists of the emotionally motivated coping tactics participants reported using to deflect hidden racial episodes. Specifically, participants discussed talking to their friends of colour, as sources of support to cope with hidden racism as well as relying on their self-worth as Black bodies. For instance, Person X shared that he has stopped ruminating over how White people think of him to mediate the effects of hidden racism:

It's very interesting how we have to censor ourselves and to tiptoe around these people and I want to be as unapologetically Black in any space. I fuck up with the whiteness in whatever way...reminding them that look, "Stellenbosch is not just White people." I'm

going to make sure that I'm as unapologetically Black in whatever way I can, in whatever way I interpret my blackness to be. If it's me in a restaurant speaking isi-Xhosa and laughing loudly and enjoying myself, I will do that.

Nelly concurs with Person X's response by stating that she too copes with hidden racism by validating herself:

I really don't give a fuck about what people think about me... I've come to a stage in my life where I know that I can be a lot for people, so I don't care what they think about me.

Other students spoke about how they have relied on their friends to help them through emotional times:

Lenny: *In terms of coping you need a good group of friends that you can vent to.*

Ayanda: *I vent! I really just talk to my friends.*

Malcolm: *My friends help me cope a lot with everything.*

4.4. Conclusion

In a utopian world, entering university should be a time of excitement where students are able to explore their identity coupled with managing academic and social demands. However, for most SOC, attending an HWI like Stellenbosch University can guarantee them an additional package of everyday modern or hidden racism which they must also deal with. This chapter has presented the dominant findings of this study through following IPA which suggests providing examples from the participants' interviews together with the researcher's own interpretation. The findings indicate that SOC encounter two forms of hidden racism around and within Stellenbosch University mainly hidden racial insults and invalidations as well as a combination of both as evident under the theme *Alienation from opportunities*. In many cases, hidden racial insults were often based on dominant stereotypes about POC and immediately recognised as involving some racial element such as in the theme *Brown criminal*. This theme was directed at all male participants who were often stereotyped as criminals which was often manifested in both verbal and non-verbal messages such as White females being visibly afraid to walk near them in public. The other four hidden racial insults focused on how White students avoid sharing seats with SOC in lecture halls,

the exotification of African hair, and incidents that made SOC feel as though their intellectual and social ideas did not have any value, or their physical melanin body was non-existent.

The hidden racial invalidations attempted to deny the individual experiences of SOC. Firstly, participants reported encountering White individuals who held onto the ideal that all POC belong in one monolithic category such as being stunned at how some SOC could articulate themselves in English conveying the message that POC do not generally speak proficient English which is an inaccurate generalisation to have. Secondly, SOC experience the White campus space to be alienating because their racial and/or political stories are often silenced by White bodies. The theme *Alienation from opportunities* represents hidden racial encounters propagated by the dominant use of Afrikaans at Stellenbosch that ultimately isolates SOC from social, academic and cultural progression.

The findings suggest that participants experienced three negative effects of hidden racism namely, social, academic and emotional effects. For instance, the researcher found that participants were more likely to avoid White spaces or making White friends to minimise encounters of hidden racism. Academically, some participants reported feeling that their marks were not reflective of their actual potential and that this was due to using cognitive energies, otherwise needed for studying, to handle hidden racial attacks. However, having a good group of friends to vent one's frustrations too was an important and helpful coping method for some participants. For others, trying to ignore racialised incidences was the only way they could prevent further damage to their psyche while a few participants reported that they were not afraid to reprimand perpetrators by educating them or enlisting the aid of authority figures such as lecturers. These findings are analysed and discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

The main objective of this study was to explore and comprehend the lived realities of students of colour (SOC) with encountering and engaging with hidden racism at an historically White Afrikaans University. The secondary objective was to understand the coping methods SOC employ to deflect encounters of hidden racism. The findings presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis highlight powerful racialised narratives of students who experience frequent hidden marginalisation due to their ‘othered’ or physically non-conforming status at a traditionally Afrikaans University. The experiences of these participants varied according to a multitude of factors, specifically those pertaining to gender and language. Overall, participants reflected on hidden racial encounters by giving reference to events occurring within the University’s jurisdiction and other events occurring around campus due to the former being inextricably linked to the latter. In this case, the participants used the University and the town interchangeably. In this chapter, the interpretation of these key themes will be done by contextualising them within the Critical Race Theory (CRT) pedagogy as a lens to understand how SOC are navigating a racially tense atmosphere where they face frequent hidden racism.

The five tenants of the CRT will be considered and, where necessary, utilised to make sense of the participants’ experience. As mentioned in prior sections, Sue and colleagues’ taxonomy of racial microaggression displays the various forms POC can encounter. The taxonomy proved useful in deciphering whether it mirrors experiences within the South African University context. Overall, participants’ narratives support the Sue and colleagues’ taxonomy (2007, 2008) as well as research conducted by other scholars (Lewis et al., 2016; Nadal, 2011; Nadal et al., 2010). To conclude, the strengths and limitations of this study are provided with a section on a few recommendations for future research.

5.2. Analysing the Experience of Hidden Racism from CRT Perspective

5.2.1. Hidden racial insults. As mentioned in Chapter 2, hidden insults are conceptualised as verbal or non-verbal communications that often carry prejudicial or insensitive messages about a SOC (Sue et al., 2007, p. 278). Within Sue and colleagues’ research, four major subthemes of microinsults are provided. Only three of these four subtypes can be applied to the findings reported by the current participants: assumption of criminal status, second class-citizen, and ascription of intelligence. However, Nadal’s (2011) study conflated the two former themes into Component 2 of

his Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS) to denote all hidden racial behaviours that convey the message that POC are dangerous, aberrant and untrustworthy which leads to POC being treated as second-class citizens, that is, not engaging with them or avoiding association with them because they are not authentic humans. This was reflected in the current study's themes of *Brown criminal* and *You can't sit with us*.

In terms of the former theme, all the male participants of this research independently shared vivid memories of their frequent encounters with White strangers in Stellenbosch exposing their racial presumptions that men of colour (MOC) as being deviant. These accounts are not novel as similar responses have been reported in various racial microaggression studies with Black or marginalised participants. For example, a focus group study conducted by Smith and his team (2007) with 36 African American males on their experiences with racial stereotypes and microaggressions on traditionally White campuses found that their participants reported increased incidences of racial stereotypes of MOC which led to them being policed on campus due to their race and gender. Other studies, such as by Hall and Fields (2015), Rosenbloom and Way (2004), Hotchkins (2016), Nadal et al. (2011), and Smith et al. (2007) all endorsed the theme of assumption of criminal status. Analysing this theme from a CRT perspective, the experiences of the male participants in this study frequently occur because of dominant ideologies which vilify MOC. Simultaneously, their experiences can also be understood from an intersectional perspective which points out that these male students experience hidden racism, not only because they are Black, but also because they are men. When these two attributes intersect, they create an exclusive dynamic for MOC which makes them more prone to being victims of discrimination than individuals who are neither Black nor male as evident in the findings of this thesis. According to research conducted by Creighton et al. (2014), MOC experience gendered racism because of the prevalence of dominant negative stereotypes about their alleged notorious nature. Collins (2009) and Monroe (2005) assert that these negative stereotypes about the criminal status of MOC are a direct result of the socialisation of our society whereby MOC are depicted, especially in media, as villains characterised by their gangsterism, drug use and unfathomable violence.

Husserl's natural attitude can also be utilised as an extension of CRT's permeance of racism as the concept describes the ordinary or default way of viewing the world without explicit reflection. According to Weiss (2016), the term 'natural' does not insinuate that these ideologies or ways of thinking are inborn in us. Rather, Weiss who draws from Husserl's work, explains that our natural attitudes are predominately shaped by the dominant socio-cultural practices of the period we exist in such as our ideas about race and gender. So, when the White female from Lutha's narrative moved away from him or when they grasped their bags tightly when they saw Malcolm and his Brown friends approach them, they did these hidden racial insults because of the deep-seated

pervasive cultural stereotypes of MOC located in their natural attitude. Unfortunately, these pervasive images of MOC have become normalised and put them at risk for encountering the assumption of criminal status stereotype.

In terms of the theme, *You can't sit with us*, all participants recalled numerous moments of witnessing White students purposefully avoid sitting next to them or physically removing themselves from SOC in lecture rooms which made them feel invisible or like second-class beings. The same avoidance behaviour by White people was reported at Wits University whereby Black participants lamented that White students physically remove themselves when a Black person(s) sat next to them or avoid talking to Black students around campus (Woods, 2001). Similar results about White students specifically avoiding sitting next to SOC were found in Harwood et al.'s (2015) and Sue et al.'s (2009) racial microaggression studies. The dominant ideologies of POC as being a figure of danger can also be used to understand White students' behaviours towards the participants – they are afraid to sit next them, because they consider them dangerous criminals or untrustworthy.

A more plausible conclusion can, however, be drawn by looking at the pervasive socio-historical context of South Africa. Prior to 1994, laws such as the *Extension of University Education Act* and the *Groups Area Act* did not only ensure that Whites and POC attained differential degrees of education, but the system also ensured there was no structural way for them to socialise in the same physical space. There has been a significant amount of research conducted in South Africa supporting the contention that there is still limited racial interaction among university students. For example, Schrieff and colleagues' (2005) study observing the degree of contact between different racial groups at a UCT dining hall during eating hours, found that students tended to self-segregate by sitting with individuals who resembled their racial background even when they were given the opportunity to integrate. Other studies such as Walker (2005) and an experimental study conducted by Gibbs (2010) at UCT generated identical results. Foster (1991) explains that this is due to how deeply penetrating the apartheid discipline was in influencing the way in which different racial groups socialise. As a result, this leads to South Africans forming interactions based on their aligned social or cultural group providing possible insight as to why White students prefer not to sit with the participants of this study – from a CRT viewpoint, their avoidance behaviours represent the dominant rhetoric about intergroup relations in South Africa, that is, segregation is an integral part of being.

Feelings of invisibility. The themes *You don't have a say* and *Ghosted*, like the theme *You can't sit with us*, were incredibly profound because they manifested as frequent feelings or experiences of invisibility and marginalisation around campus for participants. The experience of invisibility consisted of SOC's social or academic contributions being negated, and their physical

presence being purposefully ignored. All these themes reflect the treatment of the SOC as a second-class citizen or the message that “whites are inherently more valuable than minorities” (Lilienfeld, 2017, p. 142). Nadal and colleagues (2010) found that feelings of invisibility contributed to Filipino graduate students’ sense of devaluation and detachment from the HWI. The same sentiments are evident in the narratives of the current participants. This feeling of invisibility seen in these themes are commonly found in other research studies at HWIs when SOC are ignored for services or overlooked (Cornell, 2015; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harwood et al., 2015; Houshmand et al., 2014; Nadal et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000; Torres et al., 2010; Vang & Dickmeyer, 2015).

CRT’s interest convergence and Higham’s nativism can be used to analyse the phenomenon of invisibility particularly within the theme of being *Ghosted* which mirrors Franklin’s (1999) concept of invisibility syndrome as the internalised interpretation that one’s presence or abilities are devalued due to being members of a racial minority. Franklin notes that invisibility does not equate to the notion that the White person cannot actually perceive an entire physical being in their vicinity. Rather, it denotes experiences that make a POC feel ostensibly disrespected or not acknowledged because of their race. In essence, there is an element of nativism within Stellenbosch that leads SOC to be ghosted which Higham describes as an “intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign connection” (1955, p. 4 as cited in Lippard, 2011). Higham further postulates that nativism is extremely divisive as it “always divided insiders, who belonged to the nation, from outsiders, who were in it but not of it” (1999, p. 384 as cited in Lippard, 2011, p. 593). This concept is unique to the discrimination foreigners experience when entering a country that has deep nationalist sentiments such as the USA. However, this concept can be utilised within the Stellenbosch vicinity despite it not being a country of its own, because of the extreme ‘otherness’ that SOC experience. That is, SOC are ghosted because they are not perceived to be natives in Stellenbosch because of their lack of physical and linguistic membership which renders them as outsiders henceforth unimportant. More importantly, the White students choose not to acknowledge them because their interests do not converge, that is, there are no perceived advantages or benefits in conversing with them.

The normalisation of Black invisibility pre-1994 made it possible for Whites to relegate Black people to the periphery. Fakir (2018) writes that the indoctrination of the innate inferiority of Blacks rendered their lived realities insignificant to Whites and the effects of such teachings are still evident in the post-1994 landscape. Thus, when some White students disregard a physical Brown body, they do so because of being socialised to invisibilise POC or only give attention to those they perceive to form part of their White circle. This is demonstrated in Person X’s narrative when he was ignored by the White receptionist until his White-passing Aunt confronted her.

The experience of being dismissed in the classroom is a frequent hidden racial insult encountered by SOC from a range of studies. For example, one SOC attending an HWI in Harwood and co-authors' (2015) racial microaggression report described the alienation he experienced in a classroom when his opinions are dismissed by stating that "I feel as though what I have to say often doesn't matter to the rest of the group members and that I am ignored overall" (p. 12). This mirrors Thando's experience during mandatory groupwork when she stated that "*I said something, and no-one considered what I said...*" because she was the only Black person in the group. These hidden racial experiences could be classified under two of Sue et al.'s (2007) microinsult themes: *second-class citizen* or *ascription of intelligence*. For example, perhaps Thando's academic contribution was dismissed because White students believe Black people are lesser human beings than Whites. Similarly, this experience can also denote hidden racial encounters that inform social perceptions about a racial group's intellectual level. When White students dismiss the intellectual views made by SOC, they endorse the coercive racist ideology of the intellectual inferiority of POC, specifically Black individuals. These binary stereotypes which cast Black intellectuality as inferior to White intellectuality, are entrenched in the post-1994 community. This is supported by a study conducted with South African first year students where the author, Puttick (2011), concluded that young South Africans, both White and SOC, are still internalising the dominant pre-1994 racial stereotypes that place White intellect at the apex.

CRT's interest convergence can be applied to understand the dismissal of social contributions made by SOC as evident in the theme *You don't have a say*. It can be argued that post-1994 Stellenbosch has been rebuilt under the foundation of interest convergence. Prior to 1994, the University prided itself in being an 'Afrikaans University' as one known for the preservation of Afrikaans knowledge, culture and language. Post-apartheid has seen the influx of SOC into this once only-White utopia, because of the desegregation policies of democratic South Africa. Stellenbosch has even gone further to accommodate SOC by establishing the T-option or 50:50 policy (bilingual option) which requires lecturers to give Afrikaans and English equal status in the classroom.

However, it can be argued that these cosmetic changes have only been developed to create a sanctuary for Afrikanerdom in the name of diversity so that White Afrikaners can retain their power (Brick, 2006). This is the major premise of interest convergence. According to Delgado (as cited in Harper et al., 2009), White people "will [only] tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when they also promote white interests" (p. 391). This interest is seen in the dominant institutional culture at most HWIs. That is, the underlying factor causing SOC to experience devaluation in many of these HWIs is largely due to the privileging of White cultural interests over other identities. This is supported by Read and co-authors (2003) who argue that despite the

desegregation of HWIs, the normalisation of whiteness remains the agenda reflected in the dominant images of students as being “white, middle-class and male” (p. 271). Bourke’s (2010) research coincides with Read et al.’s (2003) by commenting that the traditions “celebrated [at HWIs] are those based in Whiteness” (p. 128). Similarly, a student in Hotchkins and Dancy’s (2017) study lamented that, “I don’t see an appreciation for difference, only White culture” (p. 45).

In Stellenbosch, the unchangeable hegemonic Afrikaner curriculum of the University which gives the language and Afrikaner heritage royal status in academic and social spaces instigates a sense of non-belonging for the current SOC. This is seen in Thando, Samantha and Lenny’s narratives when their Afrocentric cultural preferences such as music or drama are completely disregarded. From CRT’s interest convergence lens, SOC have benefited proportionally from transformative policies such as being allowed access to Stellenbosch, but this was arguably only possible so long as the Afrikaner institutional culture remained intact. Thus, since Afrocentric music or theatrical activities do not support the interests of White students and the broader Stellenbosch society, they will likely be dismissed or not even put to mind. This gives White individuals the power to nullify ‘othered’ traditions, because they do not adhere to the status quo. Therefore, when a White student tells Thando to “stop playing this [music]. No-one wants to listen to this” in front of a diverse undergraduate student audience, she does so under the impetus that it [the music] does not mirror White Stellenbosch’s idea of ‘campus fun’.

Feeling exoticified. The final subtheme identified, *Objectifying black hair*, pertaining to the exoticisation of Afrocentric hair was a new theme that was endorsed by most Black female participants which did not fit in any of the 10 themes conceptualised by Sue et al. (2007). However, Johnston and Nadal (2010) devised their own typology consisting of five themes of which one, the exoticisation and objectification of multiracial bodies, resonates with the experiences encountered by the female participants of this study. The authors conceptualise this theme as occurring when a multiracial person is “dehumanized or treated like an object” (p. 135). This theme also consists of a subtheme, *race on display*, where multiracial individuals are constantly faced with having to explain their racial background to inquisitive others (p. 133). Although Johnston and Nadal’s research are based on multiracial individuals, the female participants in this research also reported being put on display or feeling like they were an object to others due to White individuals, particularly females, probing them with questions about hairstyles, hair cleanness or touching their hair without their consent as in the case of Mpho. These experiences reinforce the belief that Black beauty is still peculiar to the White norm. The findings in this study mirror existing theoretical and empirical research (Hall & Field, 2015; Lewis et al., 2016; Pittman, 2012; Sue et al., 2008; Thompson, 2009).

From a CRT perspective, the intruding comments on Afrocentric hair is a direct cause of their historical and social positionality as the ‘unattractive’ racialised other in comparison to Eurocentric beauty. Existing literature on this topic reveals that for centuries, Whites have held onto and propagated the dominant narrative that African hair is inferior to White hair disparaging it as unclean, unprofessional and synonymising it to the texture of ‘wool’ (Byrd & Tharps, 2001; Caldwell, 1999). Alubafi et al. (2018) state that derogatory Afrikaans terms such as ‘kaffir hare’ (African hair) or ‘boesmanskop’ (bushmen or indigenous hair), and degrading apartheid techniques like the pencil test were proliferated during colonisation to highlight their deviation from the superior White race in doing so, this invalidated African beauty.

The pencil test, according to Ndlovu (2008), involved inserting a pencil into the hair of an individual who was racially ambiguous. To pass the test, the pencil was intended to fall out of the individual’s hair who would then be decreed White and have access to privileges that came with being White. However, if the pencil remained in the hair then the person was deemed Afrocentric. In doing so, the apartheid government was able to ensure the dehumanisation of African people and their aestheticism to maintain White’s cultural and social sovereignty. Fast forward 24 years later Black beauty is still being policed as seen in stringent hair policies at schools, such as Pretoria Girls High School, that tell impressionable young Black girls to tame their natural Afros to succumb to Eurocentrism.

Womanist Musing (2008) also maintains that, narratives of unsolicited African hair touching by White people, like that depicted in Mpho’s story, highlights White people’s continued colonisation of Black bodies, in particular, the female Black anatomy. If we place Womanist Musing’s argument within a historical context like that suggested by CRT, it is not unreasoned because, historically, the Black female body has always been a site for the amusement of the White world. This country’s history with the violation of the Black anatomy goes back to the case of Sara Baatman who was sold as a slave and paraded in London like an animal for White bodies to dissect and criticise, what appeared to them to be, unnatural physical qualities like her big African buttocks (Clark, 2013). The act of unsolicited African hair touching by White people is, as Womanist Musing (2008) explains, related to this inherent belief of White people that they have property rights to the Black body, and this can sometimes make Black women feel like they are there to perform for Whites for their gratification. This was evident in Thando, Mpho and Samantha’s stories who expressed feeling irritated, and uncomfortable by the questions White women ask about their preferred hairstyles.

These insensitive and ignorant hidden insults directed at Black women about their hair reveals the ignorance that Eurocentric beauty trends are the norm and Afrocentrism is atypical or

peculiar even in an era where it is possible to be educate about other diverse expressions of beauty with the rise of social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram and Twitter.

5.2.2. Hidden racial invalidations. The findings of this theme mainly highlight experiences with the underlying message to “exclude, negate, nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality” of the SOC (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Specifically, participants reported experiencing hidden racial invalidations that manifested as ‘compliments’ about their competence in English as seen in the subtheme, *Monolithism of SOC*. Under the same subtheme, some participants shared encounters with White individuals around campus who insulted the way they speak English. In Sue and co-colleagues’ (2007, p. 275) research, this type of hidden racial invalidation is categorised under the theme “*alien in one’s land*” which mainly describes verbal indignities intended to impose a specific, mostly foreign, type of identity on the POC - one that is incongruent to their actual identities. This hidden racial invalidation has been reported in other similar studies, specifically by Asian or Latino Americans (Harwood et al., 2015; Sue et al., 2009; Tran & Lee, 2014). The current participants did not report feeling like “perpetual foreigners” as the Asian American participants lamented in Sue et al.’s (2009, p. 186) study. This is because most Asian Americans are perceived as being foreign-born due to their increased immigration into the USA and thus not identified as ‘true Americans’ which is equated to being White (Devos & Banaji, 2005). However, POC in South Africa are the majority and comments such as “*wow, you speak very well*” as described by Samantha irks them, because it reinforces the civilised/uncivilised binary prominent within our society. This binary presumes that to sound “*British-ish*” as Smiley eloquently stated is a marker of normalisation and intelligence while any ghastly diluted version of this, which White English-speaking South Africans often assume is a linguistic feature of POC, is an embodiment of poor assimilation to White civilisation (Christie & McKinney, 2017; McKinney, 2010).

From a CRT perspective, this idealisation of White English as being the superior language can be traced back to historical events of colonialism and apartheid’s racial classification system. During colonialism, native Bantu languages were rendered primitive and suppressed in favour of the colonial languages, specifically English. However, when the National Party came to power in 1948, Afrikaans was enforced as the official language of the country. Despite this, many Black communities rebelled against its infiltration because of its oppressive symbolism while English, although paradoxically having the same effect, was perceived as a means for liberation from Afrikaner rule and many Black communities used it in their daily interactions (Silva, 1997). According to McKinney (2007), due to apartheid’s segregation policies imposed in schools, demographic areas and other sectors of society, South Africans developed racially distinct English

varieties such as White, Coloured and Black South African English dialects and accents. However, White South African English has always been rendered as the elite standard as it embodies social, cultural and economic capital. In contrast, other South African English varieties, particularly the Black English accent associated with township schooling has often been met with stigmatisation often described by some linguists as a deviation from ‘normal’ White English (McKinney, 2007). This stigmatisation of Black English accents is evident in Nelly’s and Person X’s narratives who both expressed annoyance with White individuals sometimes mocking the way they or other POC pronounce specific English-related words. The elusive message reveals the frequent held bias that to speak English natively is a greater skill to have than having a reservoir of access to other languages like isiXhosa or isiZulu. Feagin (2010) supports this view with his work on language-mocking. He writes that when English-speaking individuals insult the English level of non-native speakers, they inform the dominant discourse of the anglicisation of society and ‘other’ the non-compliant.

To be White, during oppression, meant to be educated and wealthy while to be Black had the polarising effect because of living in poor under-resourced conditions. As a result, many South African POC, particularly the Black population, aspired to attain this proficient colonial level of English because of its connotation to prestige and educatedness. McKinney (2007, 2010) posits that proficiency in standard English is still used as a marker to judge the racial, educational and economic standing of South Africans. This is the reason some White individuals become perplexed when they hear participants like Samantha speak English in a manner that is equal to natives, because the coercive rhetoric in the macro society is that Black accents are ghastly while White English accents define humanity.

So, when participants like Samantha, Person X or Malcolm shatter linguistic stereotypes, it is normative for the White person to then enquire about their economical and geographic background, because for SOC to attain such effortless accents they must have been proximal to Whiter neighbourhoods or attended former white schools where they acquired a superior education and polished English skills. This is not a farfetched conclusion, because there has been evidence supporting the transition and assimilation of Black or Coloured bodies into Whiter spaces, because of whiteness’ attachment to power and efficient facilities, services, superior English and livelihood (De Kadt et al., 2014; De Klerk, 2000; Findley & Ogbu, 2011; Lafon, 2010; Msila, 2005). Thus, when POC are lauded over their fluent White-English skills, it represents, to the White individual, that they endorse White values.

The theme *Get over it* which occurs when White people nullify or invalidate the lived realities of oppression faced by SOC endorses CRT’s colour-blindness ideology and mirrors Sue et al.’s (2009) theme of *denial of racism*. Colour-blindness is problematic because it gives White people the power to dismiss any conversation that exposes the permanence of White privilege and

thus undying racism (Gallagher, 2003). This is seen in comments such as “*no, not everything is about racism*” or “*you are such a racist*” as expressed in Person X and Samantha’s narratives respectively. As stated in Chapter 2 of the literature review, the post-racial rainbow nation rhetoric creates the illusion that democracy has resulted in the elimination of inequalities and discrimination. Thus, when White students shun participants like Samantha, Thando and Nelly for talking about daily encounters of racial trauma post-1994, they do so under the rainbow nation premise that arguably endorses the belief that being evasive to colour can heal the wounds inflicted by racism. Thus, anyone who challenges this dominant narrative is probably inaccurate. However, this evasiveness to race and racism ultimately trivialises and invalidates real encounters and feelings of marginalisation witnessed by SOC (Harwood et al., 2015; Nadal et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2009). Additionally, it divulges the ignorance of how easily White people transfer societal problem as Black people’s personal baggage as though they are not culpable of the racial enslavement of POC.

5.2.3. Alienation from opportunities. The most prevalent racialised experience of marginalisation was the exclusion they encountered from academic, social and work opportunities as a direct result of the linguistic and cultural domination of Afrikaans. This theme overlapped in a variety of Sue and co-authors’ racial microaggression subtypes such as *second-class citizenship* and *denial of racism*. For example, when Ayanda and Thando complained about different work opportunities offered to them in comparison to Whites students, this can infer treatment of SOC as inferior human beings. On the other hand, it can also infer the White students’ and lecturers’ actions in supporting racial inequalities, but they are not aware that these actions endorse their denial of racism. Thus, as a result of this, categorising this theme independently was necessary. However, the common message illuminated in this theme is one of exclusion. That is, White-Afrikaans speaking students or lecturers have a biased preference for communicating in Afrikaans even within multiracial spaces like classrooms, residence meetings or orientation programmes intended to welcome all students irrespective of linguistic background.

Similar accounts of overall exclusion from academic, work or social activities are consistent with other racial microaggression studies (Brezinski, 2017; Harwood et al., 2015; Holder et al., 2015; Hunter, 2011; Morales, 2014; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Sue et al., 2009). However, language as a tool to instigate and preserve feeling of exclusion, and segregation is unique to this study as the above-mentioned studies have not reported this finding as an aspect of hidden racial invalidation. In this study, the Afrikaans language, contributed to the participants’ racialised realities. CRT’s intersectionality theory is applicable in comprehending the student’s hidden racial experiences. That is, the current participants’ narratives are unique, because of the intersectionality of race and language occurring when SOC, specifically Black identifying

students, are subjugated or ‘othered’, because of their perceived non-membership to Afrikaans and the culture of its speakers. There is not much literature written on the intersectionality of race and language.

Nonetheless, this finding is perhaps unsurprising when considering the South African context, because of the historic conflating of language and race as tools to position individuals within a specific social order one that privileged Afrikaans-speaking Whites over other racially linguistic bodies. Alexander (2004) asserts that the pre-1994 government went through extensive measures to “lift up the Afrikaans language to the position where it was at least equal [or even superior] to English” so that the language could become intellectualised in every sector of society (p. 115). This investment in the Afrikanerdom of the South African landscape was particularly successful in Stellenbosch where apartheid practices thrived within the town and the University. As a result, Brick (2006) writes that the town and University shall always be inextricably synonymous to apartheid.

For most of the participants, the Afrikaans language symbolises a resistance to change that was fought for, by marginalised communities, pre-1994. Thus, the rigid use of Afrikaans in an academic or social context alludes to POC that Afrikaans individuals will not relinquish their power to acknowledge or make comfortable non-Afrikaans speaking humans, who are mostly Black. In addition, this strong attachment to Afrikaans and the Afrikaner traditions reveals the hidden message that Stellenbosch is not a home for SOC. This intersectionality of language, culture and race makes these hidden racial experiences uniquely South African.

5.3. Effects of Hidden Racism

Existing research asserts that POC develop racial trauma as a result of multiple incidents of racialised interactions contributing to a range of psychological, economic, social, physiological suffering (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Hardy, 2013; Lebron et al., 2015). Stevenson (2003) further elaborates that racial trauma is birthed when POC are unable to resolve the blatant or hidden racialised encounter. Some of the negative effects of racial trauma include inability to concentrate, sleep deprivation, ruminating over prior events, anger, anxiety and depression (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Bryant-Davis, 2007; Carter, 2007; Reynolds, Sneva, & Beechler, 2010).

Three students lamented on how cumulative effects of hidden racism impacted their academic performance. For instance, Lutha described his failure to concentrate on the prescribed academic material due to ruminating over past racial events. Salvatore and Shelton (2007) and Sue (2004) suggest that his lack of concentration is due to depleted cognitive energies that were used to make sense of the multiple racist sufferings he had to endure and as a result, this impairs

performance on his academic tasks. For Smith (2004), Lutha is suffering from, what he has termed, racial battle fatigue. Racial battle fatigue is conceptualised as “the physiological and psychological strain exacted on racially marginalized groups” due to daily exposure of hidden racism (Smith et al., 2007, p. 555). His conceptual framework postulates that due to having to navigate and exist in these HWIs which favour Whiteness, SOC often find themselves having to divert their academic energies to deal with negative injuries caused by the cumulative build-up of hidden racism thus this can impair thinking abilities needed to concentrate on pertinent responsibilities.

Substantial research shows that SOC generally feel unsupported by their White peers and professors due to their inability to understand their experiences which can result in SOC avoiding certain classes, remaining mute in class in order to evade negative feedback or feeling a sense of discomfort which can contribute to poorer academic capabilities (Davis et al., 2004; Harwood et al., 2012; Hurtado et al., 1998; Solórzano et al., 2000; Worthington et al., 2008). These effects were seen in Person X’s and Ayanda’s narratives who reported being dissatisfied with the lack of support from individuals from their respective faculties. Although it was impossible to infer whether their academic performance deteriorated without prior evidence of this, it can be deduced that these experiences are not conducive to their education and might stunt their overall academic development. Their accounts mirror findings from participants in Solórzano et al.’s (2000) study who described their dissatisfaction with the lack of academic support available for Black students at HWIs. As a consequence of this unsupportive environment and other racialised encounters with the faculty, Person X deregistered from the course. Solórzano et al.’s (2000) study also found that some African American college students dropped out of a class or from university and/or changed to different modules due to cumulative hidden racial sufferings within an unsupportive White campus climate. Other studies also support results from this research about the academic impacts of hidden racism on SOC (Hurtado et al., 1998; Rovai, Gallien, & Wighting, 2005; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Sue et al., 2009; Steele, 1997; Watkins, 2012; Yosso et al., 2009).

Person X and Ayanda also commented on the Eurocentric Afrikaans curriculum that resulted in them dropping out of a course or avoiding taking a necessary module because it was going to be instructed in Afrikaans respectively. The mere fact that these students attest to being academically affected by the hegemonic White-Afrikaans curriculum speaks to the failure of Stellenbosch University to transform. Ighodaro and Wiggan (2011) posit that an educational curriculum that is shaped to represent and reproduce Whiteness while ‘othering’ minority intellect perpetuates violence on its learners. In a parallel argument, Shohamy (2006) asserts that a language policy has a way of legitimising the unequal social linguistic quota system by prioritising the ‘standard’ languages from marginalised languages thus reinforcing violence upon the latter. Taking these two arguments into consideration, this violence is seen in the White-Afrikaans language policy that

convey the message to SOC that their lived realities and remoteness to Afrikaans is irrelevant, and a constipated focus on White scholarly work nullifies the historical and cultural contribution of POC. This is a plausible reason as to why Ayanda's and Person X's academic performance were compromised, because as Person X lamented "*course outline is not there for you as a Black individual*".

Emotionally, some participants reported grappling with identity issues, suffering from severe numbness, isolation, depression, and intrusive recollections causing sleep deprivation. These emotional or psychological injuries are consistent with existing research on the mental consequences of prolonged exposure to race-related interactions (Broman et al., 2000; Reynolds et al., 2010; Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007; Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2007). Similarly, these psychological symptoms such as sleep deprivation due to being haunted by prior racial events, depression, emotional numbness and isolation are examples of psychological impacts of racial battle fatigue found in studies conducted on SOC or faculty of colour (Franklin et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2016). The literature suggests that SOC at HWI can develop depression, because they may feel alienated or a profound sense of devaluation from the largely White culture of the University which is not meeting their needs (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Truong & Museus, 2012; Williams, 1999). This was apparent in Mpho and Person X who self-reported as suffering from some depressive symptomology, because of not adjusting to the culture of the town and being dissatisfied with the treatment of SOC. Luckily, both students reported that they received psychological counselling to relief some of their depression.

The identity crises evident in some of the narratives is a normative consequence of being in an environment that requires one to assimilate to feel a sense of belonging. Substantial literature postulates that minority students who attend HWI often face an "*internal conflict*" as Smiley lamented, because they are placed in a difficult situation whereby they have to either try to maintain their ethnic connections or assimilate to the majoritarian norm or "*wear a mask*" like Lenny stated, in doing so, rejecting their internal needs (Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Feagin, Vera, & Imaniet, 1996; Fleming, 1981; Glenn & Johnson, 2012; Harper & Quaye, 2007; Jones, 1979; Lewis et al., 2000; Sydell & Nelson, 2000). In both cases, SOC still feel a sense of alienation and of never quite fitting into the hegemonic White culture as evident with the current study's sample.

Researchers Glenn and Johnson's (2012) co-cultural study on African American male students' experiences in an HWI showed that even when they were racially victimised, they still reported wanting to assimilate to the White philosophy so that they could minimise perceived discrimination. This is illuminated in Lenny's narrative when he lamented that he tries to behave like his White peers so that he can feel a sense of acceptance even though he acknowledges that he is being disingenuous to his real self. This disintegration is due to the desire to fit into the White

majority, because Whiteness as Ahmed (2007) writes “orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they ‘take up’ space and what they ‘can do’. If to be human is to be white, then to be not white is to inhabit the negative: it is to be not.” (p. 149). Therefore, SOC who grapple with identity dissonance or politics do not necessarily think that they will become physically White rather, they crave proximity to Whiteness, because only then will they feel a sense of ‘humanness’ and thus access to privileges such as the ability to have their voices be heard without facing scorn. Like Smiley stated “*they have to identify or see white in me*” so that his existence can be validated so much so that White people forgets that he is a perpetual outsider or the stereotypical Black.

Arguably, SOC might want to assimilate to Whiteness, because they want to enjoy their campus experience like their White peers who are often disconcerted about pertinent economic or social issues as seen during the South African student protests. Studies have shown that Black students or minority students at HWI report lower satisfaction with the campus climate than their White peers due to an unsupportive cultural environment (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Fleming, 1984; Nettles, 1988; Sedlacek, 1999). Thus, it is plausible that by assimilating, SOC believe that they can boost their overall satisfaction with campus life.

As a result of the emotional impact from hidden racial interactions, the overall sentiment held by student participants was that they avoid making White friends, because of a lack of similarities with Whites or because they do not feel comfortable with them. In general, this self-segregation from Whites was used to minimise potential discrimination. This analysis is supported by claims made from Gurowitz (1991) as well as Aguirre and Turner (2004) who aver that self-segregation occurs for SOC, because they do not identify with the White campus climate and are dissatisfied with the hostile treatment they receive from White people and the institutions. Other studies on SOC at HWIs yielded relatable results arguing that most SOC self-segregate with others with whom they share commonalities and are often not as welcoming to the out-group (Aguirre & Turner, 2004; Allen, 1992; Douglas, 1998, Lewis et al., 2000; Smith & Moore, 2000; Tatum, 1997; Wertheim, 2014; Woods, 2001). For example, some South African undergraduate SOC at a HWIs in Wertheim’s (2014) study expressed positive views about affiliating with their racial group, because they have the same cultural background and lack commonalities with Whites. Some participants also lamented that they avoid occupying ‘white spaces’ where White people socialise. The “White space” is a colloquial term most SOC use to denote those settings in the wider society that are largely occupied by White people such as the university, restaurants or social clubs. When POC are present in these ‘white spaces’ they “note the proportion of whites to blacks...when judging a setting as too white, they can feel uneasy and consider it to be informally “off limits” (Anderson, 2015, p. 10). Anderson further asserts that these spaces are often approached with great caution or completely avoided by POC.

5.4. Coping Methods

In this study, participants' coping behaviours were categorised as problem-focused, emotional-focused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) or avoidance-focused (Billings & Moos, 1984). Students used a combination of these coping strategies when they were confronted with hidden racial exchanges. Problem-focused coping included taking action to alter the racial situation such as by educating White people about their racism or, in some cases, reporting racial incidents to authority figures. This finding supports existing research (Giwa, 2016; Hernandez et al., 2010; Lewis et al., 2013). For instance, a qualitative study conducted by Hernandez and colleagues (2010) which explored the coping methods POC use to combat hidden racism shows an example of problem-focused coping. Some participants argued that they deal with perceived hidden racism by confronting offenders and organising public talks emphasising the importance of addressing such issues. Similarly, Lewis and co-authors (2013) conducted a focus group with female African American university students to discover the ways in which they cope with gendered racial microaggression. The results showed that participants would engage in resistance coping, arguably an example of problem-focused coping, by voicing out their pain or directly challenging racially potent situations. Participants also employed problem-focused coping by nonconforming to Eurocentric beauty trends on campus. The authors assert that by using one's voice, the victim is able to take control and alter the situation. The participants who actively challenged racial injustices did express that they felt liberated and in control of their own fate.

Most participants discussed how beneficial it was for them to have other POC as friends to vent to about racial encounters, because they can resonate with these experiences as a form of emotion-focused coping. The emotion-focused technique of relying on social networks as a means to cope with hidden racism or other perceived racial prejudices is well documented in the existing literature and appears to be the most frequently utilised method among POC (Brondolo et al., 2009; Constantine et al., 2008; Coon & Kimmelmeir, 2001; Grier-Reed & Wilson, 2015; Hall et al., 2013; Harrell, 2000; Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Thompson, 2006; Utsey et al., 2000; Watkins et al., 2007). For example, Constantine and colleagues (2008) found that social support from other POC was the most common coping technique used by Black faculty members at an HWI to handle experiences of hidden racism. Similarly, African American male students at an HWI in Watkins and colleagues' (2007) study predominately relied on "social support from one another" as a buffer against cumulative racialised encounters (p. 114).

Several research studies on marginalised communities' experiences with racial prejudice have found gender differences with women more likely to seek social support than men (Kuo, 1995; Swim et al., 2003; Utsey et al., 2000). However, in this study, there was no overt gender differences

as all participants averred to utilising their social networks to relieve distress caused by hidden racism. Utsey et al. (2006) and Lincoln et al. (2005) aver that having a supportive social network can diminish maladaptive effects of racial discrimination such as anxiety and depression thus allow individuals to be more resilient in the face of hostile environments.

Two participants also discussed that they were able to alleviate distress from racial encounters by validating their 'otherness'. This was categorised as a form of emotion-focused coping as it does not actively change the racialised situation like problem-focused coping rather, it helped the individual develop a more positive self-esteem despite overwhelming racialised encounters. There is seldom research supporting the view that validating oneself is a form of intentional coping. For instance, Holder et al. (2015) and Sue et al. (2008) yielded this result as a form of reactions to racial microaggressions rather than coping.

However, in Shorter-Gooden's (2004) study on the gender racism encountered by 196 Black American women, adopting a positive self-image was identified as a form of internal coping strategies, which is arguably similar to Lazarus and Folkman's concept of emotion-focused coping. This form of coping, termed *valuing oneself* in Shorter-Gooden's research allowed the women to reject dominant negative narrative about themselves, thus contributing to their sense of racial pride. Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey (1999) assert that self-identification with one's group, which is an example of validating one's identity; can act as a mechanism against negative effects of racial discrimination and increases self-esteem. Hurd et al. (2012) concur by stating that a positive sense of self and racial pride is associated with better academic performance and adjustment especially for Black students at HWIs.

The most popular coping method was desensitising from hidden racial experiences, for example, acting as though nothing happened as a means to eliminate potential harm. Ruggiero and co-authors (1997) state that marginalised communities who are often victims of racial oppression tend to rely on avoidance-coping, because it helps them trivialise the situation so that it appears to be less distressful thus temporarily reducing any form of pain they may experience. This was evident in several studies with POC (Harwood et al., 2015; Hernandez et al., 2010; Hoggard et al., 2012; Holder et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2013; Ortiz-Frontera, 2013; Salazar, 2009; Scott & House, 2005; Shorter-Gooden, 2004; Utsey et al., 2000). Suls and Fletcher (1985) and Thompson (2006) suggest that avoidance coping is more likely to exacerbate distress, because the target problem is not being directly addressed like in problem-focused coping. Avoidance coping has been linked to depressive or anxiety symptoms and an overall low life satisfaction (Barnes & Lightsey, 2005; Mark & Smith, 2011; Utsey et al., 2000). However, this could not be directly determined in this study as students were not tested on depression or anxiety measures. On the contrary, most students seemed rather unbothered about dismissing racial encounters, because it could be that they have

accepted that they are a racial minority in Stellenbosch and have thus come to terms with the knowledge that they will always be victims to racial subordination which they cannot change.

5.5. Limitations and Contributions

There were seven major limitations in this study. Firstly, with a small purposive non-random sample, this study does not permit the findings to be generalised to all SOC at the university. Similarly, these findings cannot be generalised to other South African universities, particularly other HWIs. It was valuable to conduct research on the experiences of SOC at post-apartheid Stellenbosch given the history of the institution. Secondly, amalgamating all SOC for this study instead of exploring distinct experiences of, for example, only Black students was an ostensible constraint. It can be argued that the hidden racial experience of Black students at Stellenbosch is qualitatively different to some Coloured students. This was evident in the theme *Alienation from opportunities* where most Coloured participants did not lament on the Afrikaans language being an obstacle to academic, social or work opportunities. This is because, according to Webb (2002), the majority of Coloureds in South Africa, especially in the Western Cape, speak Afrikaans natively, and in some cases, are completely bilingual. Rather, most Coloured participants complained about the overall institutional Afrikaans culture. Despite this conflation of all Black and Coloured students, it is clear from the results of the study that these students have mirrored hidden racial experiences.

A similar criticism can be given to the lack of Coloured or Indian female voices in this study. There was only one Indian-identifying female student who had slightly diverging encounters to the Black female participants. Overall, she did not report as many marginalising experiences as the Black female students. It should also be noted that most of the participants are humanities students thus there was a lack of representation from students from other degree programmes which might have been useful.

Fifth, although this study was relatively diverse in terms of gender and racial background, the participants' prior educational backgrounds were homogenous. Most participants lamented that they come from poor or middle-class locations, but most of them attended predominately White high schools or Model C schools where they were accustomed to whiteness and such encounters. Furthermore, English was the main language of learning and teaching in their secondary schools thus participants spoke it fluently. It could be suggested that Black or Coloured students who have had a predominately homogenous school background or who do not speak English fluently may report more negative incidences of marginalisation compared to the current sample. This was relatively ostensible in Person X and Nelly's stories who testified to being victim to and/or

witnessing language or accent mocking. Nonetheless, it is important to have a more representative group from all socioeconomic and cultural settings to be more inclusive. However, it should be highlighted that despite participants speaking English fluently, there were some cases where some participants struggled to describe a specific encounter without using their mother tongue. These cases were minimal, but nonetheless important to consider as this may have diluted some expressive narratives.

A further possible criticism for this study is the choice to conduct individual interviews instead of focus groups. The initial rationale was that the former means of data collection would allow individual lived stories to gracefully flow without them being inhibited or dominated by others. However, I noticed that some participants could have benefited greatly from a dynamic focus group discussion, because they constantly sought validation or support for their experiences from me or they would refer to another participant in their narrative. This is largely because most of the participants navigate the same social or academic circles as either personal friends, classmates or acquaintances thus a lot of the events they shared overlapped significantly. For example, Samantha's story about being silenced by a White male student in class was supported by Karina who attends the same class. There were also diverging interpretations of the same events which were not included in the results section due to limited space. However, the individual interviews should not be discounted as they ultimately provided a space for participants to be as unapologetically themselves as possible. They were also valuable as they offered participants undivided attention which could have been compromised if a focus group was created.

Irrespective of these limitations, this research study enhances and provides new knowledge, especially the intersectionality of race and language, to the existing literature on racial microaggressions encountered by SOC at HWIs. This information is particularly credible within South Africa due to the lack of local studies that examine the cumulative impact of hidden racial oppression on SOC. Secondly, by using CRT's counter-narratives, this study was able to showcase participants' first-hand encounters with continued marginalisation at Stellenbosch University which is often dismissed by White people as evident in some of the narratives. These narratives give voice to SOC and thus challenges the hegemonic assumption of a post-racial campus society. More importantly, this research is arguably appropriate in the aftermath of the transformation debate at Stellenbosch University and other HWIs. It presents further introspection on the degree of transformation post #FeesmustFall and other similar student movements which call for a more inclusive and diverse learning environment. The implications for transformation offered below can help inform envisioned social and cultural renovation plans that centres on eradicating the sense of homelessness and alienation encountered by many SOC.

5.6. Recommendations for Future Studies

Given the limitations of this study, it is recommended that forthcoming studies utilise a larger sample size to ascertain the experiences of SOC attending HWIs from all over the country. This can be done through focus groups which will allow participants to share or debate relevant ideas and give researchers an opportunity to analyse both verbal, and non-verbal responses. Future studies can also look at how these experiences differ or converge with students who attend predominately Black or Coloured campuses as there is scarce research on these populations. It would also be beneficial for future research studies to examine intra-group encounters of hidden racism as some participants did briefly highlight the occurrence of such phenomena. Similarly, it would also prove useful to examine the gendered racial experiences of female SOC at HWIs or historically Black campuses as there is enormous gaps within South Africa that address this.

While there is a large body of literature dedicated to whiteness, it would still be interesting to audit White students' perceptions about SOC and campus diversity at Stellenbosch. A focus group discussion, with both SOC and White students, could prove valuable in understanding the social and racial dynamics between these two groups at Stellenbosch. This can perhaps help White students to become more cognizant about the racial realities of SOC. These recommendations might provide richer data about the overall campus experience for SOC and allow more generalisable findings.

5.7. Implication for Transformation

It is undisputable that Stellenbosch University needs to be transformed as evident by the hidden racial tales shared by the participants in this study. CRT's final premise, as stated in prior chapters, is committed to changing or eradicating a toxically racial space which continues to marginalise POC. As such, the following implications for practice support CRT's principle of social justice, because they address ways to eradicate inequalities within the University so that SOC can finally feel liberated from, as Person X stated "*feeling numb in Stellenbosch*":

- The university's 50/50 bilingual language policy should be abolished. As evident from participants, the language policy is still creating barriers for students and perpetuating racial tension. More importantly, it dictates the institutional culture of the University which is ultimately exclusionary for non-Afrikaans cultured students. The argument given about maintaining Afrikaans as an academic language often emphasises that it is a minority language or in threat of becoming extinct because of the dominance of English (Brick, 2006). Further argument rests on the notion that the main objective for creating an Afrikaans enclave within Universities is to

“nurture, develop and promote [its] knowledge” (Trust vir Afrikaanse onderwys [TAO], 2017, p. 23). However, if we accept this argument, then we should also consider the plethora of South African languages that also need further development. We should also consider the fairness in forcing Black students to speak English or have comprehension of Afrikaans when, in most cases, neither language is their mother-tongue. However, having an English medium language could unite students, because this way all students are disadvantaged by a language that is not their own. Boyer’s (2013) study conducted at Stellenbosch University concurs as participants in her study (some Afrikaans-speaking) believed that English was a unifying language that allowed some commonality among students while the use of Afrikaans was exclusionary. As stated by a legal report compiled by TAO (2017) “the retention of Afrikaans is not a constitutional obstacle for transformation” (p. 13). Perhaps, this will eradicate the University’s long-standing reputation as an institution for Afrikaners.

- The University should look into employing more academics of colour (AOC) and recruiting more SOC. Harper (2013), who uses various works to support his argument, posits that having Black academics at HWIs is beneficial as they can help foster a sense of belonging for SOC; they can validate their racialised experiences and act as role models for those students who aspire to pursue an academic career. Madyun and co-authors (2013) concur by suggesting that having Black lecturers at HWIs can benefit the entire academic community such as White students who may learn to question their dominant stereotypes about POC and equip them with “a more sophisticated ability to understand realities across cultures” (p. 81). Hence, the University should make it a priority to employ more AOC and managerial staff, particularly African women. Naicker (2013) states that African female scholars are severely under-represented in academia due to their historical otherness and subordination. Thus, without redressing these injustices, universities will continue to replicate apartheid education supporting a homogenous, White, community. Having Black and female professoriates can show the University’s profound commitment to eradicating inequalities and transforming the predominately White, male, middle-class executive environment. Recruiting more Black professors and managerial staff will ultimately offer them the opportunity to influence curriculum development thus renovating the one-sided, White, academic interest. In doing so, coursework material may change to reflect a more African world-view and thus allow SOC to see themselves represented. However, if the language policy is not reevaluated, it will be

arguably difficult for AOC, who do not comprehend Afrikaans, to apply or be attracted to permanent positions at Stellenbosch which in turn reduces the University's opportunity for the abovementioned benefits.

- Harper and Hurtado (2007) assert that the University should go beyond looking at transformation as solely entailing adding more minority students and professoriate. Rather, the authors suggest that HWIs should review the campus racial climate which permits the marginalisation of SOC. The University can start by re-examining the cultural curriculum such as the welcoming programme and other campus activities that fail to recognise multicultural identities on campus. These recommendations on changing the cultural curriculum at HWIs to favour a more multicultural method have been offered by various researchers (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Toni & Olivier, 2004). By doing so, SOC might be able to participate in campus activities without fearing that their cultural interests will be dismissed and perhaps this might help foster more interracial friendships.
- If the University is to recruit more minority students and professors, then they should also consider setting up adequate support structures and spaces where minority bodies can express their racialised feelings without being policed.
- The University should consider deconstructing apartheid symbolism around campus that is interpreted by SOC as a support of their oppression. As Waite (2017) suggests, colonial symbolism in public spaces, such as Universities, should be deconstructed and placed in historic museums where some people can freely celebrate their supremacist history and others do not have to be witness to it daily as it represents for them a dark time. This recommendation is not unique to this study as similar debates were raised during the 2015/2016 student protests as well as in some South African research studies (Cornell & Kessi, 2017; Nyamnjoh, 2017; Open Stellenbosch Collective, 2015; Pillay, 2016; Steyn & van Zyl, 2001).
- Faculty and staff should attend cultural/racial competency workshops on a continuum as this will allow them to be cognizant of their prejudices and create a deeper understanding of their students. Vandeyar and Swart's (2016) call for a "pedagogy of compassion" in decolonising apartheid teaching practices is compelling. It entails educators embodying a compassionate attitude towards their students whereby the students are not merely passive to the educators' pedagogy. Rather, the educator and the student collide in knowledge sharing, and each party can challenge the underlying assumptions of the other in a sensitive manner. It also entails a commitment from the educator to be critically reflective and dismantle their

underlying biases while transforming the academic space to be comfortable for all parties involved. This is in line with Howard's (2006, as cited in Ukpokodu, 2011) transformation pedagogy which emphasises the importance of White teachers truly examining themselves, such as their beliefs on race, culture, inequalities, gender, before they are able to comprehend their multi-ethnic students. It is only through this self-reflection and acceptance of biases that educators will be truly transformed thus better equipped to address racial issues in and around campus. This transformative pedagogy should be proposed to educators and taught in future cultural competency workshops.

- Open race/cultural dialogue groups should be funded and established on campus where the University community can overcome their discomfort with such 'taboo' topics. Numerous research endeavours have shown the academic and social benefits of cultural/racial awareness workshops for students (Bowman et al., 2011; Denson & Chang, 2009; Engberg, 2004; Katz & Ivey, 1977; Kennedy et al., 2014). For example, Bowman and co-authors' (2011) 13-year longitudinal study on students' long-term engagement with diversity such as structured racial/cultural awareness programmes, talks or attending an ethics module, had a positive impact on their ability to recognise their own racial biases, and helped students, even after college, adjust well to racially diverse environments. If cultural workshops cannot be done, then these discussions should be integrated into all degree programmes where students are given the opportunity engage with their prejudices about outgroup members.

5.8. Conclusion

This study's objective was to examine the hidden racial experiences of SOC at a historically White, and Afrikaans, campus. This study supports the argument that hidden racism or racial microaggressions, as commonly known, are not benign but can be incredibly detrimental to the livelihood and mental wellbeing of SOC. The findings conclude that navigating Stellenbosch is a daunting, racialised experience for the storytellers of this study. They have battled hidden racial dragons spiting fires of social, linguistic and racial marginalisation intended to scorch their sense of humanness in a space that should be advocating for a diversity of both intellectual and social beings. Rather, the University is perceived as one that is exclusively White where some SOC encounter identity dissonance, because their 'otherness' is repulsed. However, the findings have articulated that many SOC, despite daily exposure to hidden racism, have developed coping

methods to shield themselves from further emotional and social blisters while temporarily inhabiting a historically White campus. This exposes their tenacity to thrive albeit the hostile environment. However, the University should be proactive in transforming the campus racial climate by firstly renovating the institutional culture. Once this is accomplished, it can significantly increase SOC's sense of belonging and safety at the institution.

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hive.org_cgi-bin_showfile.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

Appendix A: Semi-structured interview guide

Introducing the study once participants have completed the consent form (see Appendix C):

Hi, my name is Elina. I currently doing my master's degree in Research Psychology. I am conducting research on students' of colour (SOC) lived experiences of racial microaggression at Stellenbosch University. 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). Specifically, my study is concerned with the experience of various forms of microaggressions that you, as a SOC, encounter at the University, and how you cope with these encounters. So, I am interested in YOUR experiences as SOC at SU. 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 Stellenbosch University. 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?

Section 1: Introduction

I will now switch on the digital recording device.

[TURN ON DIGITAL RECORDER]

Firstly, for the sake of the recorded interview, please could say your pseudonym and say which race group you identify with (if at all).

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself?
2. What were your expectations about university before you applied?
3. Where in Stellenbosch do you reside?
 - a. How have you experienced staying in student residence?

Section B: Questions about Racial Microaggressions (Hidden racism)

For the next questions, I will be asking you a few questions about your experiences with racial microaggressions. Just to reiterate, it would be helpful if you could provide detailed narratives about these experiences.

1. Now that I have read the definition of racial microaggression to you, do you think you have experienced racial microaggression?
 - a. What has the experiences being like for you studying at a historically White-Afrikaans university? Tell me about you experiences from your first year up until today.
 - i) Think of some of the perceptions people hold of you or that exist about your racial group. How have others subtly expressed their stereotypical beliefs about you?
 - ii) How do you make sense of these experiences?
2. In what ways, if any, have these experiences impacted/affected your life such as in terms of academics, socially or emotionally?
3. What are some of the coping methods you have used to deal with perceived racial bias?

Appendix B: Biographic questionnaire

Selected Pseudonym of the participant: _____

Sex: _____

Self-designated racial background (if applicable): _____

Self-designated Cultural background (if applicable): _____

Age: _____

Year of study: _____

Study field & Faculty:

Main Language: _____

Other Languages:

Residential area before moving to this campus: _____

Appendix C: Informed consent form



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jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Lived experiences of hidden racism at a historically White-Afrikaans University

My name is Elina Kamanga. I am a master's student in the Psychology Department at Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study that will contribute to a research paper for the MA Psychology Research degree. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you: self-identify as a student of colour (SOC) and you are willing to share your experiences as a student at Stellenbosch University.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim and purpose of my study is to explore the experiences of hidden racism experienced by students of colour at Stellenbosch University. The secondary objective is to explore the coping mechanisms that students use to handle or deflect perceived hidden racism.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you would be asked to do the following things: You will first be asked to complete a demographic questionnaire. The demographic questionnaire only requires you to specify details about yourself such as your pseudonym, age, race, year of study and language, and will take about 5 minutes. These details are necessary to provide contextual background for the study. Your identity will remain anonymous and be kept confidential throughout the research process. The only information I will use for the final dissertation is your pseudonym and other important demographic details.

The second part of the study involves an individual semi-structured interview that will focus on your hidden racism narratives, as well as the coping strategies that you employ as a buffer against those incidents. The interview session will occur during the March/April 2018 at a setting that will be comfortable for you. There are approximately three general questions that will be explored for responses, and you may be asked to elaborate on certain aspects for clarity. The interview should take about 60 minutes. The interview will be conducted by myself (Elina) and will be digitally audio recorded. The recordings will be saved in a pass-word protected file. By signing this consent form, you are consenting to your interview being recorded via a digital audio recorder.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This study is deemed to be a medium risk study, as you will be discussing intimate experiences that may elicit anxious feelings. Data collected from this study will be strictly confidential and will be stored in an appropriate and safe place. You will be able to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence. Your information will not be used if you decide to withdraw from the study during data collection. The experiences you discuss during the interview may potentially trigger some emotional pain that was not

present before. If you experience any discomfort or anxieties after partaking in the study, you can access counselling at the Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic and the Centre for Student Counselling at Stellenbosch University. These counselling services are free. The counselling services contact details are:

- A. Welgevallen Community Psychology Clinic
Tel: 021 80802696
Email: wpc@sun.ac.za
Website: www.sun.ac.za/wpc
- B. Centre for Student Counselling at Stellenbosch
Tel: 0210804707
- C. Dorothy Calata
Email: calatad@yahoo.com
- D. Lerato Machelata
Email: lerato.mizelle@gmail.com

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There will be no financial benefit for participating in this study. However, this study will contribute to the scarce literature on the lived experiences of hidden racism faced by students of colour at university. This study will provide significant insight into the various ways hidden racism can manifest on a historically White campus, and also reveal the various ways students of colour attempt to cope with perceived hidden discrimination.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

The information collected from this study will be strictly confidential. Your identity will be protected and not divulged in the write up. Use will be made of pseudonyms. The interview recordings will be transferred to a personal password protected computer and will be given to my supervisors (Prof. Anthony Naidoo and Prof. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela) for safe-keeping. The interview recordings will be deleted once the data has been analysed for meaning.

6. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation is voluntary thus you can choose whether to be in this study or not. As such, if you do not want to continue with the study, you may withdraw at any time without receiving penalties of any kind. Your information will not be used if you decided to withdraw from the entire study. During the interview process, you might experience personal distress due to talking about certain situations or challenges you may have encountered. Thus, you can decide to refrain from answering any question that makes you feel uneasy.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact:

- 1) Professor Anthony Naidoo
Department of Psychology
Stellenbosch University
(021) 808 3461 /avnaidoo@sun.ac.za
- 2) Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela
Department of Psychology
Stellenbosch University
pumlagm1@gmail.com
- 3) Elina Kamanga

Stellenbosch University
078 394 1254/ elinakamanga@ymail.com

8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to the participant by Elina Kamanga in English and will be satisfactorily translated to him/her should the participant not be in command of this language. The participant will be given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions will be answered to his/her satisfaction.

I hereby consent to participate in this study.
The participant has been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*]. [*He/she*] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix D: Ethical Clearance Letter**APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS****REC Humanities New Application Form**

24 October 2017

Project number: REC-2017-0894

Project title: Black Students' Lived Experience with Racial Microaggression at a Historically White University

Dear Ms Elina Kamanga

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on 11 October 2017 was reviewed by the REC: Humanities and approved with stipulations.

Ethics approval period: 24 October 2017 -

23 October 2018 REC STIPULATIONS:

The researcher may proceed with the envisaged research provided that the following stipulations, relevant to the approval of the project are adhered to or addressed:

The researcher is reminded that institutional permission is required from the SU Division for Institutional Research and Planning to commence with data collection. The researcher is further reminded to submit a copy of proof of permission to the REC once obtained.

[ACTION REQUIRED] HOW TO RESPOND:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Request for permission	IRP Service Desk	08/08/2017	IRP request and ref

Some of these stipulations may require your response. Where a response is required, you must respond to the REC within **six** (6) months of the date of this letter. Your approval would expire automatically should your response not be received by the REC within 6 months of the date of this letter.

Your response (and all changes requested) must be done directly on the electronic application form on the Infonetica system: <https://applyethics.sun.ac.za/Project/Index/968>

Where revision to supporting documents is required, please ensure that you replace all outdated documents on your application form with the revised versions. Please respond to the stipulations in a separate cover letter titled “**Response to REC stipulations**” and attach the cover letter in the section **Additional Information and Documents**.

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

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

Please use your SU project number (REC-2017-0894) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

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

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Default	Turnitin Originality Report	08/08/2017	Turnitin Report
Data collection tool	APPENDIX A	11/10/2017	Interview Guide
Data collection tool	Appendix B	11/10/2017	Biographic Form
Research Protocol/Proposal	Black students experiences with hidden racism (REC Modification)	11/10/2017	Proposal
Informed Consent Form	Appendix C - Consent Form	11/10/2017	Consent Form
Default	Responses to REC feedback (Master Proposal)	11/10/2017	Responses to REC

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

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

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

The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research:

Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

Investigator Responsibilities Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2. Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

3. Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4. Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur**. If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5. Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6. Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

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

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

9. Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

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