

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RECONCILIATION AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE TO TRANSFORMATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE**

by

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Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reviews the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State. A qualitative research approach was followed and entailed official document analysis and in-depth interviews. Sixteen key informants were selected and interviewed. The data was thematically analysed so that patterns could be identified.

The key findings of this study were: The IRSJ is a strategic unit in the process of pursuing institutional transformation within the UFS. Facilitating the transformation process at UFS equals a higher cognitive legitimate institution because its organisational activities become more in line with the recommendations of the higher education sector as well as the wider social system. Transformation represents a novel idea that needs to be introduced within UFS' institutional walls. This is not an easy task, but the IRSJ is doing a progressive and productive job by using strategic reframing strategies such as the critical conversations.

The IRSJ completes a challenging task of strategically reframing the novel idea of transformation in order to gather more support for this greater goal. They do this by helping people better understand the importance of transformation. This topic is so sensitive and challenging to comprehend that a safe space such as the IRSJ is vital in achieving a transformed institution. Once the UFS will have achieved its transformation goals, it will become a more cognitive legitimate institution that is more accepted by the wider social system.

Key Words: Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice, Higher Education, Transformation, University of the Free State.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABW	Anglo-Boer War
BGIM	Brian Gibson Management
CDCS	Chief Directorate Community Service
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CTL	Centre for Teaching and Learning
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
FSCHR	Free State Centre for Human Rights
GUC	Grey University College
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HERANA	Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa
ID	Institute for Diversity
IIDE	International Institute for Development and Ethics
IRSJ	Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NP	National Party
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFS	Orange Free State
SRC	Student Representative Council
UCGH	University of the Cape of Good Hope
UCOFS	University College of the Orange Free State
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDUSA	Union of Democratic University Staff Associations
UFS	University of the Free State
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UOFS	University of the Orange Free State

UOVS	Universiteit van die Oranje Vrystaat
UP	United Party
USA	United States of America
UVS	Universiteit van die Vrystaat
Wits University	University of the Witwatersrand

1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Today, more people than ever, have the privilege of obtaining a university education (Frohlich, 2014). Since the beginning of the 21st century, organisations such as the World Bank and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have acknowledged universities as engines of development. Per the declaration of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Conference on Higher Education in 2009, higher education is a public good because it plays an important role in the advancement of society (UNESCO, 2010, p. 14). However, the extent of this advancement depends on how the national higher education systems relate to the state as well as to various other stakeholders (Lange, 2012).

While a large portion of the world population became increasingly educated, many South Africans did not have that opportunity due to the implementation of Apartheid legislation in 1948 and the reinforcement of racist legislation with the Bantu Education Act of 1954 (Keswell, 2004, pp. 1–2). The Apartheid government founded an education system which prescribed racial separation (Nkomo, 2013) and inherently promoted the superiority of whiteness (Higham, 2012). When universities emerged in South Africa, contrary to what happened in other African countries, it was not a sign of national independence, nor an instrument of the state in shaping a post-colonial society. Commonly, universities were either part of a colonial ideology, e.g. historically white universities or part of the reproduction of a system of racial domination, e.g. historically black universities (Lange, 2012). In 1994, the first democratic government inherited a higher education system in desperate need of transformation, existing of 36 higher education institutions created by acts of government divided along racial, ethnic, linguistic and geographical lines. Their goal was to create a single, coordinated and diverse higher education

system through transformation processes which seek to end racial separation and inequality (Higham, 2012; Lange, 2012; Xaba & Mofokeng, 2006).

South Africa's current Higher Education framework is based on two very important documents which are the National Commission on Higher Education Report: A Framework for Transformation (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996) and the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (DoE, 1997). The National Commission on Higher Education was established during the transitional period of the country, from Apartheid to the post-apartheid dispensation ushered in with the 1994 elections. This commission was established with the goal of facilitating the complex process of transforming higher education. All stakeholders had the intent of developing a policy, which would result in a quality higher education system. To achieve this system, inequalities and inefficiencies inherited from the Apartheid era needed to be addressed while new social, cultural and economic demands needed to be met (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). The White Paper consists of a thorough set of initiatives for the transformation of higher education through the development of a single coordinated system with new planning, governing and funding dispositions (DoE, 1997).

One of South Africa's higher education institutions that went through several stages of transformation is the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein. The University of the Free State originated in 1904 as an English medium institution (UFS, 2006, p. 15). Later in the 1910s, the institution developed into a dual English and Afrikaans medium institution and around 1929, a language struggle began and eventually, in 1948, English was phased out in favour of Afrikaans only. This was a consequence of the UFS taking on a Christian-National character, supporting the Apartheid ruling government. From 1950 until 2001, the university was known as the "Universiteit van die Oranje Vrystaat (UOVS)" or "University of the Orange Free State (UOFS)". The inclusion of "Orange Free State (OFS)" in the institution's name in 1935, was intended to nurture a sense of identification in the people the institution served (UFS, 2006, p. 163), the white, predominantly Afrikaans-speaking, inhabitants

of the Orange Free State province. White trek farmers established the Republic of the Orange Free State in 1854, after many battles. In 1900 they lost their independence during the Anglo-Boer war and the OFS was annexed by Britain and renamed the Orange River Colony. In 1902, the Peace of Vereeniging Act enabled the renaming to Orange Free State. In 1910, the province became the Orange Free State province as part of the Union of South Africa (Puukka, Dubarle, Mckiernan, Reddy, & Wade, 2012, p. 42).

In 1984, first decisions on the admission of black students were made (Dawson, 2006, p. 277). In 1989, the transformation process began. To better manage this process, a Transformation Committee was founded in 1994 (UFS, 2006, p. 350). This committee existed of representatives of all levels at the University, from the black community and from the City Council. The Transformation Committee achieved more multicultural representation on the University Council, the adaptation of a policy of affirmative action and the diffusion of student unrest (UFS, 2006, p. 350). As part of this process, the first multicultural Student Representative Council (SRC) was elected in 1995. Concretely, this was achieved by demanding from students to vote for at least two candidates of the other language group. The result of this election was that the SRC of 1995 included one English-speaking and one black member (UFS, 2006, p. 351). In 1994, after the first democratic government came into power, the Orange Free State was renamed the Free State. This reconstituted province existed of the previously named Orange Free State and two previous homelands, Thaba-Nchu and Qwaqwa. Homelands were the home of Africans who were forcibly relocated as a consequence of Apartheid's residential segregation laws (Puukka et al., 2012, p. 42). The Council of the then UOFS decided to keep up with the times and changed the university's name to "Universiteit van die Vrystaat (UVS)" in 1996 and eventually to "Universiteit van die Vrystaat/University of the Free State/Yunivesithi Ya Freistata (UFS)" in 2001. The last change was a consequence of an amendment of the Private Act of the institution, which acknowledged English as a medium of instruction alongside Afrikaans. The UFS thus offered parallel-medium instruction in Afrikaans and English and also took into account the need to promote Sesotho as a scientific language. The UFS herewith reflected that it served

the people from the reformed Free State (UFS, 2006, pp. 351–352). The National Plan for Higher Education (Department of Education, 2001) demanded the UFS to incorporate the QwaQwa Campus of the University of the North and the Vista University's Bloemfontein campus in 2003 and 2004 respectively, which contributed to the diversification of UFS' total student population (UFS, 2006, p. 361).

On 26 February 2008, a video surfaced which would change the UFS culture for many years to come. The video made at the Reitz residence on the Bloemfontein main campus was racially insulting and hence damaged UFS' public image (UFS, 2012a, p. 11). This incident made clear the need for dramatic changes in predominantly the social life at the UFS (UFS, 2012a, p. 3). In October 2009, vice-chancellor and rector Prof Jonathan Jansen announced a “new institute dedicated to the study of race, reconciliation and social justice” (UFS, 2012a, p. 12) as one of the measures UFS would take to address the Reitz scandal (Seekoei, 2011). In his inauguration speech Prof Jansen specified that “the university will become a place that exemplifies the scholarship and the practice of reconciliation, forgiveness and social justice” (UFS, 2012a, p. 12). He added that “scholars and students from around the world will descend on the institution to study and understand the theory and practice of building a community across the divides of race but also religion, gender, disability and ability, national origins and sexual identity” (UFS, 2012a, p. 13). In September 2010, John Samuel kick-started this institute's work by hosting conversations about race with students (UFS, 2012a, p. 13). He was the interim director of what would become the International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice until its official launch. Participants in the Institute's first activities included Allan Boesak and Jay Naidoo (Seekoei, 2011). One of the aims of the Institute is, up until today, to contribute to the broad transformation process at the UFS (UFS, 2012a, p. 11). In order to achieve this aim, several channels are employed such as critical conversations, events co-hosted with faculties and research activities. These kind of events allow, within the critical space that is the Institute, to innovatively explore and find solutions to complex social transformation issues (UFS, 2012a).

It is in this context that I wish to investigate transformation at UFS, while focussing the research on the role the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice (IRSJ) has played in UFS' transformation process. As Prof Jansen pointed out during a panel discussion on Higher Education on 13 May 2014, transformation can be defined as “deep, qualitative changes in human understanding which are expressed in acts of care, connection and commitment towards all human beings regardless of who they are, working towards a common goal” (Jansen, 2015, p. 2). The deep, qualitative changes referred to by Prof Jansen are the parts of the transformation process that intrigue me and this process is currently a work in progress at UFS. The aim of the IRSJ is to contribute to these changes. The aim of this study is to investigate how the IRSJ contributes in this regard.

1.2 THE INSTITUTE FOR RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (IRSJ)

The IRSJ is mandated to focus its research on “social justice”, “reconciliation” and “equality” (IRSJ, 2012, p. 1). Prof André Keet, the director of the IRSJ, says that “particularly the concept of ‘social justice’ has proven to be very productive as an operating and intellectual principle since it more or less captures the multitude of expectations relating to the IRSJ” (IRSJ, 2012, p. 1). The work of the IRSJ was initially divided into two pillars: Institutional Transformation and Human Rights. Institutional Transformation work allows the IRSJ “to operate as an observatory of institutional transformation and capture the multitude of transformative initiatives as an integrated human-academic project” (IRSJ, 2012, p. 1). The IRSJ's Human Rights Desk developed into the independent academic Free State Centre for Human Rights (FSCHR) in January 2016. This centre, led by Prof Leon Wessels, consists of an advocacy and legal services division (UFS, 2017a, 2017b). Since 2009, the IRSJ initiated several kinds of activities related to its research areas. The Critical Conversation Series, started by John Samuel, are part of these activities. The purpose of these conversations is to question social and political issues in an intellectually powerful way (IRSJ, 2012, p. 5). During

these Critical Conversations, attendees have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the topic addressed, which is possibly an unfamiliar concept. This kind of exposure allows for new ideas to challenge beliefs within the higher education sector as well as within the UFS. Organisational fields, such as higher education have their institutional walls, which often prevent new ideas from infiltrating. It is, however, often good to challenge institutionalised beliefs and keep up with the time. If new ideas have become highly legitimate within wider society, the education sector can only benefit from becoming more compatible. “Cognitive legitimacy is the framing of an organisation as desirable, proper and appropriate within a widely shared system of norms and values” (Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 238). Thus, if the UFS embraces ideas which one considers legitimate by societal norms, its cognitive legitimacy increases. This can be achieved through a better understanding of these ideas via the critical conversations (Boxenbaum, 2008).

1.3 RATIONALE

When I was a Belgian exchange student at UFS in 2012, I was introduced to the work of the IRSJ and my interest was piqued. I was very humbled and pleasantly surprised when I was accepted to contribute to its work as a research assistant in 2013-2014 and later as a Masters’ student. Apart from the IRSJ’s regular newsletters and annual reports, I have not encountered much academic work documenting and interrogating the role of the IRSJ in its central function of driving transformation at UFS as announced by Prof Jansen in 2009. I regard it as imperative that academic analysis is begun about this obviously important structure of the UFS. This Institute is one of the key drivers of UFS’ vision in regards to the Human Embrace (UFS, 2014, p. 52). Thus, analysis of the IRSJ’s role in driving this vision is essential for stakeholders to understand how this vision is interpreted by the IRSJ and how it is driven in tangible ways.

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Institutional transformation entails that new ideas are implemented in a developed organizational field. The process of transformation is not always a

successful process. I am intrigued to find out how new ideas can gain enough legitimacy to challenge the institutional culture. The institutional literature suggests that a jolt, in the form of a major event, has the potential to destabilize an institution, which as such becomes more susceptible for unfamiliar ideas (Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 237). Therefore, this kind of destabilizing events are an opportunity to introduce new ideas. In the context of the UFS, I consider transforming to a socially just UFS to be the new idea that was only slightly legitimate between UFS' institutional walls before the Reitz incident took place. After the incident, the institution's community reconsidered the idea of a socially transformed UFS and increased its efforts to thoroughly transform the UFS to a place that was more socially inclusive and rejected racist behaviour. The destabilization, the Reitz incident, resulted in the establishment of the IRSJ, which helps people to make sense of the transformation process in a less abstract way.

“Organisational legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 573).

I chose the organisational legitimation theory as the conceptual framework of this study. Recent racial incidents lead me to believe that the entire UFS community does not yet accept the idea of a transformed institution. In January 2014, private accommodation owners were looking for “non-affirmative action students” in need of accommodation. In February 2014, the UFS made the newspaper headlines again because a black student was allegedly driven over and beaten by two white students (“Another alleged racist attack at UFS,” 2014). Then again in February 2016, a peaceful protest in support of workers' issues resulted in a violent situation. It was reported that white students attacked black students when the protestors interrupted a rugby match (Equal Education, 2016). As such, transformation cannot be considered a legitimate idea within the UFS, because the events that happen do not resonate with the objective of achieving a transformed institution. There are two sets of objectives in the context of transformation in higher

education in South Africa. Firstly, an analytical approach aims to assess the outcomes of post 1994 policy proposals. Secondly, attempts are made to produce knowledge that contributes to better understanding higher education transformation (Cloete, Fehnel, Moja, Perold & Gibbon, 2004, p. 2). This better understanding is essentially contributing to transformation becoming a more legitimate idea within the sector. I believe that in a democratic South Africa, a university cannot be considered appropriate by its surroundings if it does not actively embrace principles of social justice. This sentiment is shared in the Framework for Transformation report written by the National Commission on Higher Education (1996), which has a vision for Higher Education in South Africa based on four purposes of Higher Education as a social institution. One of these purposes is the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and critically constructive citizens that can fulfil leadership roles. These citizens supposedly have the capacity to reflect on and renew prevailing ideas and traditions as well as existing policies and practices (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996, p. 68). If we want to fulfil this purpose of Higher Education at the UFS, it is important that the transformation process gains legitimacy, so that our graduates become responsible citizens who embrace principles of social justice. This policy ideal could not be more in line with a definition of institutional legitimation that seeks “congruence between the social values associated with or implied by organisational activities and the norms of acceptable behaviour in the larger social system” (Suchman, 1995, p. 573). In order for the UFS to operate congruently within Higher Education South Africa and the South African society they need to educate their students to be advocates for transformation. Other purposes presented in the Framework for Transformation report include, meeting the learning needs of individuals, providing the labour market with skilled workers who can productively contribute to the economy and ensuring the advancement of knowledge through teaching and research (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996, pp. 68–69).

Theories about institutions suggest that many dynamics in institutions stem from cultural norms, symbols, beliefs and rituals (Suchman, 1995, p. 571). Following this logic it is clear that social division at the UFS developed from

cultural norms, symbols, beliefs and rituals. However, UFS' societal environment has changed while the institution struggles to transform in accordance with its environment. For some observers, because of this misalignment between the institution and the societal norms, the UFS is not considered a legitimate institution (Suchman, 1995, p. 574).

According to Suchman, there are three forms of organizational legitimacy, which are pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy and cognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995, p. 577). All types still involve "a generalised perception or assumption that organisational activities are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 577). Yet, each type entails different behavioural dynamics. Pragmatic legitimacy believes in the self-interested calculations of an organisation's current audiences. Usually, the organisation and its audiences are engaged in direct exchanges, which positively affects the wellbeing of the audience. Consequently, these audiences have a great influence on the activities of the organisation (Suchman, 1995, p. 578). Moral legitimacy believes in doing activities only when they are the right thing to do (Suchman, 1995, p. 579). Cognitive legitimacy is the moulding of an organisation that is considered appropriate by its surroundings (Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 237). Suchman explains that cognitive legitimacy either involves "affirmative support for an organization or mere acceptance of the organization as necessary or inevitable based on some taken-for-granted cultural account" (Suchman, 1995, p. 582). Cognitive legitimacy occurs "when an idea corresponds to taken-for-granted beliefs that render it desirable, proper, and appropriate within a widely shared system of norms and values" (Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 239). According to Suchman, an organisation can be considered appropriate based on comprehensibility (affirmative support) or based on taken-for-grantedness (mere acceptance). If the focus is on comprehensibility within legitimation, participants generally struggle to make sense of their experiences. Cultural models then offer explanations for the organisation and its activities and thus contribute to a sense-making process. If the focus is on taken-for-grantedness, in contrast to comprehensibility, participants generally occupy a coherent space. It would be simply

unthinkable to remove the organisation from the social structure (Suchman, 1995). Cognitive legitimacy, based on comprehensibility is considered to be the most relevant kind of legitimacy for this study because it is important to, firstly, frame the UFS within wider society. The institution should keep up with its time and follow guidelines within the higher education landscape. This will be beneficial to achieving a transformed institution, which offers a sense of ownership for all its students. Secondly, the focus on comprehensibility helps to make sense of new ideas such as transformation. As suggested, this sense-making process is a difficult task, but it is worth the effort if deep, qualitative transformation is the aim.

1.5 RESEARCH PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTION(S), AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main research question is:

What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State?

Three research sub-questions stem from the main research question above:

Research sub-question 1:

*What do analysis, informed by legitimisation, of **key documents and events** developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal about its role in transformation at the University of the Free State?*

Research sub-question 2:

*What are the perceptions of **key informants** about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State?*

Research sub-question 3:

*Which recommendations are made by **participants** regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State?*

The aim of the study is to investigate the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State.

To reach the aim, the following three objectives were pursued:

- To analyse, informed by legitimation, whether the key documents and events developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal anything about the Institute's role in the transformation at the University of the Free State.
- To conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews to determine key informants' perceptions about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State.
- To conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews to determine key informants' recommendations regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to seek answers to the main research question: *What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the UFS?* I opted for a qualitative approach, because it has as purpose discovering the meaning behind the phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4)

As a qualitative researcher interested in the contribution of the IRSJ in the transformation process of UFS, I am aiming to understand the meaning

people have constructed with regards to their experiences with the IRSJ (Merriam, 2009, p. 13).

Basic qualitative studies are the most common form of qualitative research found in education. Data for this basic qualitative study was collected through documents and semi-structured interviews.

To answer the first sub-research question *What do analysis, informed by legitimation, of key documents and events developed by the IRSJ reveal about its role in transformation at the UFS?*, official documents were the source of data. Official documents used for external communication, such as the IRSJ's newsletters and reports, are produced for public consumption. These documents suggest the official perspective of the IRSJ on the transformation process at UFS (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, pp. 387–388).

To answer the second and third sub-research questions *What are the perceptions of key informants about the contribution of the IRSJ to transformation at the UFS?* and *Which recommendations are made by participants regarding the contribution of the IRSJ in transformation at UFS?*, semi-structured interviews were the preferred method of data collection. Open-response questions were used to obtain data on participants' meanings - how individuals create their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 381). These qualitative interviews may take several forms, of which I chose key informant interviews. These are in-depth interviews of individuals who have special knowledge, status, or communication skills that they are willing to share with the researcher. These participants were purposively selected because they had access to observations that were unavailable to me, the ethnographer (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 381). I assume that such participants will provide deep insight based on their knowledge. The participants had the following characteristics: involvement in the founding of the IRSJ, or involvement and participation in the activities of the IRSJ or being at least aware of the existence of the IRSJ. I contacted most of them personally or by email.

There are several reasons that are part of the rationale behind the interview question content. First of all, qualitative in-depth interviews require asking truly open-ended questions and are noted for their flexibility. As interviewer, I probed to elicit further elaboration of responses. Secondly, the theoretical framework underpinning this study is Boxenbaum's legitimation theory. All questions asked relate to this notion of legitimacy, which refers to the congruence between the values that inform organizational activities and the widely accepted norms in the larger social system (Boxenbaum, 2008, pp. 237–239). Therefore, the questions asked had as goal finding out whether the UFS and the IRSJ, given that the IRSJ serves as one vehicle of the vision of the UFS, cover the cognitive legitimacy dimension, based on comprehensibility, of the legitimation process in the context of their (new) transformation process. The interviews were recorded and transcribed from audio recordings. Transcripts for these data collection activities range from 2 to 7 pages per individual.

Through Thematic Data Analysis I hoped to find some answers to the research questions of this study.

In the analysis I followed six steps in qualitative analysis: collect data, data preparation, code data, describe data, categorise data and develop patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 397).

1.7 VALUE OF THE RESEARCH

This qualitative interpretive research contributes to describing, understanding and interpreting the phenomenon that is the IRSJ and its contribution to the transformation process of the UFS. It is a phenomenological study of how people describe things and experience the IRSJ and the transformation process at UFS. The recommendations made by the key informants might inform decision makers (Merriam, 2009).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Part of guaranteeing the trustworthiness of a study is that the researcher carries out the study as ethically as possible. I tried my best to be conscious of the ethical issues that pervade the research process and examine my philosophical orientation in regards to these issues (Merriam, 2009).

The study adheres to ethical standards as participants were informed about the purpose of the study and then they gave written consent. The study was undertaken with the consent of the participants as well as the consent of the Director of the IRSJ (Merriam, p. 228). Ethical clearance was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education under the number UFS-EDU-2014-062.

1.9 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction and overview of study

Chapter 2: Higher Education Transformation: An overview (Literature review)

Chapter 3: Transformation at University of the Free State (Literature review)

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter 5: Report of findings

Chapter 6: Discussion of findings

Chapter 7: Concluding thoughts

1.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides an overview of the study, which aims to determine the contribution of the IRSJ to the transformation process at the UFS. It discusses background information about the Higher Education environment in South Africa as well as the history of the UFS and the IRSJ. It also discusses the rationale, theoretical framework, research problem, research questions and aims of the study. The method of data collection and analysis of the data are provided. The intended value of the study is stated as well as the ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with a layout of all 7 chapters.

Chapter 2 will discuss an overview of transformation in higher education both from an international and local perspective.

2 HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION: AN OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in Chapter 1, there is not much academic work documenting and interrogating the role of the IRSJ in its function of driving transformation at the UFS. But also generally, there is little work done that helps to understand the role that an outfit like the IRSJ plays in the transformation of a university. Thus, in order to better comprehend how outfits such as the IRSJ contribute to transformation, I will first look into the origin and definition of the term 'transformation' in the higher education context in South Africa and why transformation is a global trend. As per funnel approach, I then look into the inequality challenges faced in the education sectors around the globe and how these challenges are addressed using transformation strategies. For this study, I selected countries from the global North, global South and our own continent. I eventually bring it back to reflecting on transformation from a South African perspective. This overview will create clarity around the role of transformation driving forces and their relevance.

2.2 TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Transformation has not always been a term frequently used amongst activists for change in higher education in South Africa. The term was first used in the South African context as the slogan of the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA) in 1987 (Cloete, 2015). Later on, in 1991, the UDUSA hosted the first University Transformation Conference (Cloete, 2015). These occurrences introduced the term 'transformation' to the South African higher education context. In 1996, the National Commission on Higher Education's (NCHE) report had as title *A Framework for Transformation* which confirmed the legitimacy of the term (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). Illustrating the currency gain by the term 'transformation', the Centre for Higher Education Research and Capacity Building was

renamed the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) (Cloete, 2015). Another example of the employment of the term 'transformation' is the Department of Education's 1997 White Paper which was subtitled *A programme for transformation of higher education* (DoE, 1997). Transformation became thereafter the most commonly used term to articulate conceptions of change (Cloete, 2015).

In terms of defining transformation, the concept 'higher education transformation' was defined at the Second South African National Higher Education Summit held in Durban in October 2015 by Universities South Africa as a "comprehensive, deep-rooted and on-going social process seeking to achieve a fundamental reconstitution and development of our universities to reflect and promote the vision of democratic society" (Universities South Africa, 2015, p. 2). The end-goal of transformation processes should be a more equal, inclusive and socially just higher education system. The approach to the process has to be holistic so that it includes "curricula and epistemological frameworks; teaching; learning; research and engagement; student access and success; governance and management; ethics of leadership; and the wider role of the university in society" (Universities South Africa, 2015, p. 3).

In 2008, Gouws (2008) argued that the Reitz incident showed an obvious need for an analysis of the lack of transformation at historically Afrikaans universities. The fact that the climate at the UFS allowed for students to make a racist video, shows that racism was tolerated and thus indicates that more effort needs to be done to push the transformation agenda at UFS in more profound integrative ways. Gouws brings up the language issue and suggests that it is not feasible for Afrikaans universities to diversify while maintaining Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. If black and white students are taught separately, there is no cross-fertilisation of ideas possible and it is not possible for them to interact so that they learn to value one another's differences. If the end-goal of transformation is to achieve an integrated place for education, then separation is counterproductive. Hence, transformation is often associated with the language issue (Gouws, 2008). In fact, the

Language Policy for Higher Education of 2002 (Department of Education, 2002) states that the continued existence of Afrikaans universities “runs counter to the end goal of a transformed higher education system” (Department of Education, 2002, p. 12) because of its possible “separatist objective” (Du Plessis, 2006, p. 94). Du Plessis describes the language policy at Afrikaans universities as “a compromise between the need to reform (satisfying traditional clientele) and the need to transform (increasing access and becoming multilingual)” (Du Plessis, 2006, p. 109). This means that language policies that provide for parallel medium teaching are often in the way of achieving real transformation. Language policies are thus a relevant aspect of transformation policies.

In essence though, transformed universities can only become a reality if the people who constitute these institutions transform into more compassionate human beings who manage certain life skills. University graduates should be decent citizens. These necessary skills could be called citizenship competences. There are ways to adopt these kinds of skills and it is here that outfits such as the IRSJ play an important role. A study report by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA) looked into the effects of student engagement on citizenship competences (Luescher-Mamashela, 2015). The citizenship competences included in this specific study were critical thinking, leadership, diversity and social skills as well as attitudes supportive of democracy and good citizenship. The study looked at whether students who report a high level of engagement all report higher levels of citizenship and diversity competences. In the context of transformation at higher education institutions, students who developed citizenship competences will contribute to more transformed, more humane universities. The study provided evidence that student engagement relates to and enhances citizenship competences, thus highlighting the critical importance of universities’ role in providing a campus culture that provides “debates on global issues, stimulates interest in and discussions of public affairs and politics, and enables meaningful interactions with diverse others” (Luescher-Mamashela, 2015, p. 18). An outfit such as the IRSJ is set up to provide the necessary platform to facilitate student engagement by organising

events that bring a diversity of people together who debate global issues in a safe space.

'Higher education transformation' is defined as "comprehensive, deep-rooted and on-going social process seeking to achieve a fundamental reconstitution and development of our universities to reflect and promote the vision of democratic society" (Universities South Africa, 2015, p. 2). A social process implies that human beings play an important role. In the previous paragraph, I explained how student engagement contributes to students becoming decent citizens who contribute to a transformed higher education system. The exact capacities that are cultivated through student engagements that include "debates on global issues, stimulates interest in and discussions of public affairs and politics, and enables meaningful interactions with diverse others" (Luescher-Mamashela, 2015, p. 18) are described in depth by American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (M. C. Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20). According to Nussbaum, universities should actively cultivate more "civic-minded, global citizens" who are able to face a "pluralistic, democratic society enmeshed in a globalized world". She calls the kind of education that embraces these principles "liberal education" (M. Nussbaum, 2007, p. 38). Liberal education offers more than traditional knowledge and skills and focuses on cultivating the whole human being to become good citizens. Nussbaum (2007) suggests three crucial abilities for students. Firstly, students should learn the ability to critically examine their traditions and beliefs. They need to be able to think independently and question conventional thought. Secondly, they should recognise that they are part of a heterogeneous world in which everyone is interdependent. Therefore, it is important to familiarise yourself, as a world citizen, with other religions, races and genders. Lastly, students should have the ability to empathise with a diversity of people. Nussbaum hopes that if these capacities are instilled in students, the education system can develop human beings and their humanity rather than generations of useful machines (Nussbaum, 2007, pp. 38–40).

Now that I have covered the origin and the definition of higher education transformation in South Africa and how and why the IRSJ should play a role in

this process, it is valuable to look at why transformation and a student engagement approach is a global trend. At the Conference of the European Association for International Education (EAIE) held in Liverpool in September 2016, it was said that universities can only be considered cognitive legitimate if they shift their culture to strive for freedom, equality and peace around the world. The keynote speaker said: “Students who only want to be exposed to the curriculum while studying, are completely missing the point that humanity is an important aspect of education. University is about collaborating and conversing with like-minded people and stretching intellect and forming views of the world. At its heart university education will always be a human experience” (O’Malley, 2016). This highlights that universities globally are adopting a culture that strives for freedom, equality and peace and that student engagement is an important factor in achieving this transformation.

Before reflecting on transformation in various countries around the globe, I will reflect on the most recent apparent developments on the higher education transformation topic. During the last few years, transformation has received a lot of attention during the 2015-2016 campaigns for affordable student fees for all students which focus on the decolonisation of the academy in South Africa, the UK and the USA (Dugmore, 2015; Makoni & MacGregor, 2016a, 2016b; Onishi, 2015). In South Africa and at the University of Oxford in the UK, the campaign is known as #RhodesMustFall because students requested the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue because students believe it represents colonialism (Wamai, 2016). The presence of such symbols is perceived as symbolising a lack of transformation. The #RhodesMustFall campaign became an inspiration to start a series of campaigns that strived to decolonise the academy in South Africa, the UK and the USA. Students related with the campaign as a result of similar struggles they are faced with. These include institutional white supremacy, imperial capitalism, patriarchy and inequality based on class, race and gender. Decolonising campaigns focus on generally raising awareness for human rights issues in the academy. They request equal representation for all cultures and combat racism, while also demanding a decolonised and diverse curriculum. This is important because the current curriculum does not recognise the impact colonial

legacies have had on countries where many international students come from. This kind of knowledge is dominated by white capitalism and does not contribute to becoming a global centre of learning that accommodates all students (Wamai, 2016).

2.2.1 International perspective from selected countries

2.2.1.1 Introduction

In the following section I provide a cursory overview on how higher education transformation issues are raised in a selection of countries. The funnel pattern that is followed in this study starts with three countries from the global North, namely the United Kingdom, Canada and the Netherlands. In the global South, I chose Chile in South America and a few countries on our continent, Africa, and I end off with South Africa and how the demand for transformation is raised here. The UK and Canada specifically received most prominence in this review because the transformation challenges faced in these countries resemble those encountered in South Africa and are a consequence of a historically racial discriminatory education system.

2.2.1.2 United Kingdom

In the UK, racial discrimination within higher education is an increasingly trending topic of conversation following former UK Prime Minister David Cameron's statement in the beginning of 2016, in which he raised attention for the fact that UK's leading institutions fail to recruit more black students (Shipan & Griffiths, 2016). This is problematic in an education environment, which should provide a culture that embraces diversity and as such implies the need for transformation. UK's higher education sector has a lot of problems, which are related with its colonial past and racial discrimination. As such, Runnymede Trust's Aiming Higher report (Runnymede Trust, 2015), Equality Challenge Unit's response to Cameron's statement (Equality Challenge Unit, 2016), Higher Education Academy's student report (Higher Education Academy, 2014) and the National Union of Students' Race Matters report (National Union of Students, 2015) are all important sources developed

by stakeholders in the UK equalities landscape, whose research has prompted them to encourage conversations about race (Hylton, 2016).

David Lammy, a Member of Parliament for Tottenham since 2000, presents The Runnymede Trust's Aiming Higher report's foreword. He highlights that the report provides evidence for the fact that ethnic minorities in Britain generally do not experience equal opportunities in higher education (Lammy, 2015).

Alexander and Arday (2015) introduce the Runnymede Trust's report and mention the progress made to democratise the university system in the UK, while also pointing out the resistance to change. They believe there currently exists a big appetite for change because of initiatives such as 'We Too are Oxford' student campaign, the 'Why Isn't my Professor Black?' events and Black British Academics network, the push for 'Black Studies' and concern in Parliament. Change is sought after from without and within the university system. The report further focuses on four key areas: institutional cultures; access and widening participation; curriculum, attainment and employability; the experience of black and ethnic minority academics (Alexander & Arday, 2015, pp. 4–5).

The first part of the Runnymede Trust report is about changing institutional cultures. Ahmed (2015) researched "the process of race equality policies development, who writes these documents, how policies become part of performance and audit culture, as well as the role of commitment in securing institutional change" (Ahmed, 2015, p. 6). Diversity or equality workers usually compile equality policies. From Ahmed's (2015) research, it became clear that the development of equality policies did not mean that these policy ideals became part of practise. There exists a lot of institutional resistance. Thus, the correlation between documents and performance is an interesting reality. Race equality documents tend to be used as indicators for good performance. Opinions are divided around this topic. Firstly, some practitioners complained that diversity work revolved too much around writing documents and not enough around making actual changes. Others believed that documents that

point out inequalities become a measure of equality and are thus useful tools to improve the situation. However, the risk exists that universities that performed well become lazy in making continued efforts to improve racial equality while universities that did not perform well make image changes rather than real profound changes. In the end, commitment is the key to success in equality work. The race equality agenda needs to be pushed by university management otherwise it falls off the radar (Ahmed, 2015, pp. 6–7). Aside from developing race equality policies and committing to them, addressing the degree attainment gap between Black and minority ethnic students versus white students should be part of changing institutional cultures. The attainment gap is the “difference between the proportion of white qualifiers who obtained a first class honours or upper second honours and the proportion of Black and minority ethnic qualifiers who achieved the same level” (Tatlow, 2015, p. 10). This gap remains too big and indicates that Black and minority ethnic students achieve lower degree outcomes than white students with similar pre-entry qualifications and are from the same socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Detailed analysis is required so that better practice and strategies can be developed (Tatlow, 2015, pp. 10–12). Lastly, in order to change institutional cultures, there needs to be more black and minority ethnic staff in higher education, especially in senior positions (Johnson, 2015).

Part two of the Runnymede Trust’s Aiming Higher report focuses on access and widening participation. Research has proven that black and minority ethnic students have less chance to gain access to highly selective universities in the UK. Boliver (2015) states that there exist ethnic differences in university offer rates. In order to really understand these differences, more transparency is needed about university admissions processes as well as about university applications and admissions data. If universities are not obliged to publicise this information, it is not possible to improve this unfair situation. Reay’s (2015) research also shows that advantaged students enjoy positive discrimination at universities such as Cambridge and Oxford. In 2012, private school pupils accounted for 7 % of British children, 37 % of Oxford applications and 42,5 % of the Oxford intake. Eleven percent (11%) of

working-class students were taken in at Oxford and 10,3 % were taken in at Cambridge. Since most minority ethnicity students are likely to come from low socio-economic backgrounds, this reflects racial stratification. To make matters worse, research shows that those minority ethnicity students who succeed in getting into highly selective universities face substantial hurdles once they are there (Reay, 2015).

The last parts of the Runnymede Trust's Aiming Higher report presents research regarding the student experience and staffing. Andrews (2015) did research on the under-representation of ethnic minority staff in general and black in particular. Long-standing racial inequalities are reported in staffing in the UK education sector, which require an open dialogue and commitment to transformation (Loke, 2015, pp. 42–43). This under-representation has major consequences in terms of a lack of perspectives within British scholarship. To counteract this under-representation, a Black Studies Association for British Academia was established. The aim of the Association is to raise awareness around conditions faced by the black population within UK scholarship. Eventually, the Association aspires to establish Black Studies as a discipline (Andrews, 2015, pp. 30–31).

2.2.1.3 Canada

Canadian universities are in the process of transforming their academic programmes and services to better accommodate indigenous students (Universities Canada, 2015). According to Statistics Canada (2015), Aboriginal peoples of Canada include “those who reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who reported Registered or Treaty Indian status, that is registered under the Indian Act of Canada, and/or those who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band”. Paul Davidson, President of Universities Canada, says that the university completion rate for indigenous people aged between 25 and 64 years is under 10% compared to over 26% for non-indigenous Canadians (Jenvey, 2016). This means that there is a significant education gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians (Sachgau, 2015). Canadian universities are committed to improving the poor

university completion rate of indigenous students as well as fostering national reconciliation (Jenvey, 2016).

In order to achieve transformation, Universities Canada, which represents 97 Canadian institutions, offer specific academic programmes and services. Universities Canada offer collectively 233 undergraduate and 62 graduate-level programmes focusing on indigenous issues or specifically designed for indigenous students (Universities Canada, 2017). Aside from academic programmes, universities offer support services such as academic counselling and programmes aimed to help indigenous students transition to university (Jenvey, 2016).

Different Canadian universities are taking different initiatives and approaches to responding to indigenous student needs. The University of Saskatchewan is committed to closing the education gap and therefore runs several initiatives. Firstly, the University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture and Bio resources has staff dedicated to aboriginal programming and engaging with aboriginal communities (University of Saskatchewan, 2017). The College is also home to the Indigenous Land Management Institute. This is a research centre, which is dedicated to aboriginal communities on land use, resource management solutions and creating a forum for all stakeholders ("The Indigenous Land Management Institute (ILMI)," 2017). This university also sets targets for aboriginal student enrolment and retention rates. Furthermore, the university offers transitional programmes as well as several support structures. Progressively, the University of Saskatchewan has signed an understanding to close the education gap in collaboration with Saskatchewan's 23 other post-secondary institutions. This is a first in Canadian higher education history (Jenvey, 2016).

The President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Regina, Dr Vianne Timmons believes that integrating traditional indigenous knowledge with contemporary thought benefits all parties involved at higher education institutions, both academically and in daily practices, because it enriches lives and ensures the road to reconciliation (Jenvey, 2016). She also says that

different institutions require different approaches. Yet, indigenisation is as simple as acknowledging living, working and studying in traditional territories. Examples of indigenisation are naming or renaming campus buildings to reflect aboriginal languages and themes; incorporating aboriginal art on campus or committing to infusing indigenisation across the institutional strategic plan (Jenvey, 2016). The University of Regina began indigenisation 40 years ago, when uniting with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations to found the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. Uniquely, this College became the First Nations University of Canada. This is currently the University of Regina's federated partner and specialises in post-secondary education for indigenous and non-indigenous students in a culturally supportive environment (First Nations University of Canada, 2017).

Despite the efforts made by local Canadian universities, more support is needed from the government to develop human capital in Canada. Universities Canada recommends that the federal government commits to substantial sustained growth in support and financial assistance as well as the development of indigenous leaders and scholars (Universities Canada, 2015).

2.2.1.4 Netherlands

Higher education transformation in the Netherlands is approached from a different perspective compared to the UK and Canada because of the different inequality challenges the country faces. The UK and Canada are aiming to offer equal education opportunities to disadvantaged and minority ethnic students. In the Netherlands, academics and students protest against recent reforms and request a more democratic higher education system that is less market-driven (Myklebust, 2014). Reforms in the university sector have been motivated by efficiency pursuits of the government. On the first of January 2015, the Dutch government intended to convert student grants into student loans which would avail € 1 billion from the government's higher education budget. Part of that budget would be allocated as grants for students from low-income families, while the rest would be invested to improve the quality of higher education (Myklebust, 2014). Student unions

such as the European Students' Union were very dissatisfied with the government's intention to reduce the accessibility of higher education (European Students' Union, 2014).

Academics and students consequently decided to protest in February and March 2015 against university reforms and called for a 'new university' movement with greater democratisation of higher education and transparency of finances (Gray, 2015). These protests were however not the consequence of one singular event. Efficiency reforms have been taking place since the mid-1990s (Ritzen, 2015). Professor Hans de Wit of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences believes that the protests are a "manifestation of a broad discontent with the focus on rendement thinking in Dutch higher education and the lack of democracy since 1997 with the abolition of student participation on university boards, and with the boards and deans being appointed by external supervisors. In this it reflects the increasing discontent in Dutch society with politics and privatisation, which also explains the broad attention to the protests" (Myklebust, 2015).

Students thus had a wide range of demands while occupying university buildings for a month in protest against the reforms. The students' demands for a 'new university' included "greater democratisation of university governance, greater transparency of the university's finances, halting plans to restructure and cut a number of departments, a referendum on plans for departmental mergers with other universities, better conditions and protections for temporary staff, and an end to risky financial and property speculation with university funds" (Gray, 2015).

These protests are relevant globally, because they allow the development of alternative visions for the role of universities in society. At the University of Amsterdam, some academics even request a truth and reconciliation committee to do historical fact finding about how the market-driven reforms have been able to become a reality. They believe the interests of staff and students should be guarded more in the future (Myklebust, 2016).

2.2.1.5 Chile

Chile's higher education system is one in need of serious socio-economic transformation because the country's political history influences its current higher education landscape. During the military government's rule of 1973-1990, under Augusto Pinochet, the higher education system became highly privatised. This privatised system increased profits for the beneficiaries of the education business, but students have suffered negative consequences. The current system prides itself with the freedom it offers, but the reality of the matter is much different. The truth is that students from disadvantaged backgrounds, either geographically or financially, end up in inferior universities and get inferior job opportunities. Students have thus been demanding political intervention (Rodriguez-Ponce, 2013).

Students have raised their concerns about the marketization of the higher education system and have participated in protests since 2011, to demand reforms (Schiefelbein, 2012). This resulted in the state implementing state policies and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of education. However, these initiatives have been focussed on traditional academic skills, while education is about more than that. Chilean students are aware that more social perspective is required in order to become citizens of a local and global world. They have a strong interest in changing the political landscape of the country and thus continue to protest for a higher education system that offers both a strong academic formation for everybody as well as a space where students can be educated in how to transform an unequal and marketised system into a fairer society (Guzman-Valenzuela, 2015).

2.2.1.6 Kenya

Kenya's higher education challenges are very different from challenges faced in the UK, Canada, the Netherlands or Chile. According to a comprehensive study done on the challenges faced by Kenya's higher education sector, massification seems to be the fundamental problem that is a catalyst for the other problems. "Massification simply refers to the transformation of previously elite systems of higher education to mass systems of higher

education as participation in post-secondary education expands drastically” (Nyangau, 2014, p. 11). Transformation of Kenya’s higher education sector is required in order to accommodate the increasing number of good performing school-leavers. The increased demand for higher education cannot be met by the universities which are in need of facilities and lecturers nor by the Higher Education Loans Board. This results in many learners missing out on university places. In order to achieve an improved higher education system in Kenya, the government will have to invest in infrastructure and lecturers as well as avail funds for education loans (Nganga, 2015). President Uhuru Kenyatta met with chancellors from public universities and agreed that there was a “need to allocate more resources to public universities to boost research and innovation” (ICEF, 2015). Circumstances to expand and improve the higher education system in Kenya are unfortunately very challenging (ICEF, 2015).

2.2.1.7 Uganda

Also in Uganda, academics and students have been unhappy with the education system, which resulted in several strikes over the last few years. In the wake of a staff strike in 2011, Professor Francis Omaswa, director of the African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation (African Center for Global Health and Social Transformation, 2017), chaired a task team that produced a report to recommend the establishment of ‘innovation universities’ (Nakkazi, 2016). These universities would serve as engines of industrialisation and economic growth by combining research, teaching, community service and commercialisation in their missions and operations. Many of the recommendations from the report have been implemented in public universities (Nakkazi, 2016). Transformation strategies were implemented in Uganda as a result of social transformation advocates in the academy who raised their concerns.

2.2.1.8 Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe generally faces many socio-economic and political challenges including policy failures, rising unemployment, corruption and human rights violations (BBC Monitoring, 2017). Unfortunately, even university graduates

are not guaranteed to rise above these challenges and struggle to escape the unemployment trend. Thus, they often end up on the streets. The quest to enhance employability in Zimbabwe is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders and many initiatives have been implemented (Garwe, 2014; Mashininga, 2015). However, despite these efforts, unemployment in Zimbabwe is still estimated at 90%. Unemployed graduates are fed up with empty promises made by President Robert Mugabe to create jobs. They protested while wearing their graduation gowns (Mashininga, 2016). The government consequently arrested some protestors and banned protests (“We want jobs Mugabe’: Zim student arrested during graduation protest,” 2016).

2.2.1.9 Namibia

In Namibia, challenges of tertiary education fees led students to protest in 2016 (Mdutyana, 2016). Namibian students were inspired to do so by the South African #FeesMustFall movement. The Student Representative Council at the Namibian University of Science and Technology and the Namibia National Students Organisation demanded a reduction in registration fees (Makoni, 2016a). The high fee problem in Namibia’s higher education sector has yet to be resolved, but the Namibian Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) has been adapted so that more students can benefit from student loans (Makoni, 2016a; Mdutyana, 2016).

2.2.2 South Africa

2.2.2.1 Introduction

In 1994, South Africa transitioned to a democratic society after the suppressive apartheid system was dismantled. This transition to democracy included the start of the transformation of a divided education sector to one that would meet the needs of the new democratic society. The Department for Higher Education and Training is responsible for this task. In March 2008, the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, announced the establishment of a *Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education*

Institutions to “investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions, with a particular focus on racism and to make appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and to promote social cohesion”. From the assessment it was clear that that discrimination is pervasive in South Africa’s higher education institutions (Department of Education, 2008, p. 13). Despite the fact that there are necessary transformation policies in place, the real-life experiences are not on par. There seems to be two reasons for this disjunction between policy and practice. Firstly, there is not enough knowledge and awareness about the policies amongst staff and students. The second is that there is often a disjunction between institutional culture and transformation policies, because there is a general lack of understanding of what the policies exactly involve. The costs of discrimination are huge and are both psychological and physical (Department of Education, 2008, p. 14). The Department for Higher Education and Training follows the policy directions of the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building an expanded, effective and integrated post-school system* (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) as a guide to achieve its objectives of a post-school system that is “more equitable, much expanded and more diverse than it is at present, and will include a key role for employers in the provision of education and training opportunities. The system will be more integrated in such a way that the different components complement one another, and work together to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of post-school education and training in South Africa” (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013, p. xviii).

Some achievements have materialised, but there are many challenges, which need to be overcome because the current system continues to replicate divisions of the past. Firstly, some institutions, especially in rural areas, remain disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure, teaching facilities and staffing. Several challenges exist at formerly whites-only institutions, such as racism against blacks students, patriarchal practices and sexual harassment against female students and financially restrained students struggle to integrate at institutions that were designed for students from more advantaged backgrounds. There are generally few post-school education opportunities in

rural areas and informal settlements. Lastly, expansion of the system is required to offer sufficient places but also in terms of the types of education and training that are available (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013, pp. 1–2).

2.2.2.2 Protests

A series of protests in South Africa started off at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in March 2015 with the #RhodesMustFall student campaign. This movement is dedicated to move on from a colonial past and to transform universities. Students believe that symbols of white imperialism and colonialism, such as the Cecil John Rhodes statue on the UCT campus, represent the lack of transformation in the higher education sector (Wamai, 2016). Many students and staff members perceive the Rhodes statue as an insult and a symbol of all that is wrong with UCT and with South Africa – the failure of racial transformation, the power of white privilege and the persistence of racial subordination (Hodes, 2015). At first, the movement called for the removal of the Rhodes statue and in 2016 it grew into calls to end rising student fees, outsourcing workers, police brutality and patriarchal practices on campus (Makoni & MacGregor, 2016a). All these challenges are symptoms of institutional racism in university life and of a system that has not been decolonised. These challenges speak to concerns that many role-players have had for a long time, but they have been awaiting a forum to express them (Chaudhuri, 2016). One month after the start of the Rhodes statue removal demonstrations, the statue of Rhodes on UCT's upper campus came down (University of Cape Town, 2015). UCT's senior leadership said that "UCT is an argumentative university. This is an abiding strength and undoubtedly the students are leading a national debate" (Mnyanda, 2015). Role-players hope that this was a first step into faster transformation towards a more socially just education system and thus that the removal serves as a catalyst for change and engagement (Etheridge, 2016)

Protests of Spring 2015 were sparked after a 10,5% increase in student fees was proposed at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University) and at

some other South African universities for 2016. These increases are, according to the Council on Higher Education, necessary for universities to maintain their reputations, investments in human capital, capacity development, infrastructure, learner support, ICTs, curriculum development and learning resources needed to maintain the quality of our higher education. Thereafter, protests spread quickly to at least 18 of South Africa's 26 universities. Fee increases compromise the affordable access to higher education, which is counterproductive in the broader transformation process (Dell, 2015). Social media played a central role in mobilising students, hence the iconic #FeesMustFall name. It was to be expected that students would oppose the increase, since most students already greatly struggle to pay their expensive university fees, however the intensity of the protests was beyond expectations. Wits Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adam Habib emphasised that vice-chancellors have been appealing to the government to address the under-funding of higher education institutions without success (Dugmore, 2015, p. 12). Consequently, South African institutions of higher learning struggle to balance their budget. In a response to express their dissatisfaction regarding the fees increase, students protested against university leaders and government. They marched on parliament and then on the Union Buildings on Friday 23 October 2015, when student leaders and university representatives met with President Jacob Zuma (Dugmore, 2015, p. 13). Students' demands were met on the same day. President Zuma, Vice-Chancellors, chairpersons of councils, the Minister of Higher Education and Training and representatives of student organisations all agreed that there would be no study fee increase for 2016 and that also issues such as free education, institutional autonomy and direct employment of outsourced workers would be addressed. Wits University management also agreed to the insourcing of workers and committed to financially aid children of outsourced workers who qualify to study at Wits University (Dugmore, 2015).

In October 2015, the focus of the protests moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town as thousands of students from the University of Cape Town and Cape Peninsula University of Technology protested outside of parliament demanding that "fees must fall" while Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene

delivered his medium-term budget statement to the national assembly. Nene did not address the issue of student fees in his speech, which upset students. Twenty-nine students ended up being arrested when they pushed open the parliamentary gates in demand of answers to their rising student fee concerns (Dell, 2015).

In February 2016 more attention was drawn to inequality in the South African higher education sector when the UCT #RhodesMustFall student movement symbolically built a shack on the UCT campus' Residence Road, barricaded the area and called it Shackville (Makoni & MacGregor, 2016a, 2016b). The aim of this campaign was to highlight the problems surrounding limited student accommodation. They accused the university of racism for allocating rooms in favour of white international students. The campaign turned violent after the university requested the students to move the shack to the lawn, so that traffic would be able to take its normal course. Residences were invaded, barricades burnt, portraits burnt and campus community members were intimidated, also, several fires were started. Later, the university laid charges against #RhodesMustFall leaders who in turn laid charges against the vice-chancellor. Max Price, the vice-chancellor of UCT, claims that the university has tried to engage, but that some members want to create confrontation rather than constructive conversations. UCT denied preferring some students to others in residences. Conversations ultimately led to the government committing to helping with the shortage of residential accommodation at universities (Makoni & MacGregor, 2016a, 2016b).

In April 2016, a small transformation victory was celebrated when the University of Cape Town announced to change contested names of key buildings as a response to the demands for institutional transformation after the #RhodesMustFall movement. The change is meant to represent a definitive break with the past and of an opening to a future that is inclusive and respectful of diversity (Mulaudzi, 2016).

In September 2016, more student protests to draw attention to the lack of transformation at tertiary institutions in South Africa took place. At the

beginning of September 2016, students from several tertiary institutions in the Western Cape marched against Stellenbosch University's language policy and lack of transformation. The chairman of the Higher Education Transformation Network, Lucky Thekiso said "People are tired of the promises of transformation because after 21 years of democracy there is still little evidence of it in institutions of higher learning" (Joubert, 2015). When Minister Dr Blade Nzimande announced that universities would be allowed to raise their fees by up to 8% for 2017 later that same month, several universities shut down or faced disruptions (Makoni, 2016c). This, despite the fact that the minister also announced that students who qualify for funding under the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the 'missing middle' – students whose families earn more than the NSFAS threshold but not enough to afford university fees – would not increase in 2017. This would be possible due to the government's commitment to cover the 8% increment for these two groups of students. This solution was meant to be an interim solution while the government considers permanent solutions moving forward (Makoni, 2016c).

The protests on South African campuses have brought attention to a general dissatisfaction with the slow pace of transformation. For example, of the nation's 26 public universities, only 14 percent of full professors are black. This has far reaching consequences (Onishi, 2015). The challenges that the higher education sector is facing are very serious and include funding and transformation. South Africa's citizens are generally angry because the promise of educational and employment opportunities for all has not materialised (Dugmore, 2015).

2.3 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 2, I looked into the origin and definition of the term 'transformation' within the context of higher education in South Africa. I also looked at international examples of calls for transformation. The transformation trend is a global phenomenon and has been particularly trending in South Africa in 2015 and 2016. It is a consequence of South Africa's history and part of South

Africa's current social transformation. In Chapter 3 I will look at transformation within the context of the University of the Free State.

3 TRANSFORMATION AT University of the Free State (UFS)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Just like there have been calls for transformation at universities globally, there have been calls for transformation at South Africa's 26 public universities. The UFS has not been an exception to this trend. In this chapter, I start with an overview of the historical development of the UFS. This historical trajectory is important for the latter part of the chapter in which the need for transformation, the actual transformation actions and the recent protests for acceleration of transformation are discussed. At the end of the chapter I explain the theoretical framework, which influences this study.

3.2 UFS: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1 History of the establishment of universities in South Africa

This historical overview of the South African higher education sector will help to understand why social transformation is a high priority. The past Apartheid government founded an education system which prescribed racial separation (Nkomo, 2013) and inherently promoted the superiority of whiteness (Higham, 2012). This system has been in the process of transformation since Apartheid rule ended and a democratic government came into power in 1994. The system still has a long way to go before it will truly be a reflection of democratic values.

The first institution of higher learning in South Africa was the College of Cape Town, which was established in 1829. This College, just like similar colleges set up shortly after, prepared students for the matriculation, which was a necessary preliminary to university study, and some more advanced examinations of the University of London. The Colleges were usually under the guidance of the Dutch Reformed Church or the Church of England (Tamminga, 2006, p. 21). The first South African university was the University of the Cape of Good Hope (UCGH) established in 1873 (Boucher, 1973, p. 26). This institution served selected students from the various university

colleges such as Victoria College of Stellenbosch, Rhodes University College and Natal University College. This system remained in practise until the end of World War I. In 1916, a University Act was passed in parliament, which created the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch and South Africa (Tamminga, 2006, p. 21). This meant the end of the University of the Cape of Good Hope which now emerged as the University of South Africa (Boucher, 1973, p. 111). Also, in 1916, the South African Native College, later the University of Fort Hare, was founded. The college originated from an alliance between educated African Christians, traditional Southern African leaders and early twentieth-century white liberals. The education of the college was of high standards and was regarded the greatest centre of black higher education in Southern and Eastern Africa (University of Fort Hare, 2017). In 1922, the University of Witwatersrand was established. Later on, the University of Pretoria became a reality after the Transvaal University College withdrew itself from the federal structure of Colleges under the University of South Africa. Consequently, the University of South Africa became a distance learning university in 1946. Eventually, after the second World War ended, the other university colleges gained full university status: Natal University in 1949, the University of the Orange Free State in 1950, Potchefstroom University and Rhodes University both in 1951, Port Elizabeth University in 1964 and the Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg in 1967 (Tamminga, 2006, pp. 21–22).

3.2.2 1904-1927: Grey University College

The institution of higher learning, which is today known as the University of the Free State was established in 1904 (UFS, 2006, p. 15). The first few students registered on the 28th of January 1904. The Free State was going through turbulent times. The Anglo-Boer War (ABW) ended just a few months before the University's establishment. Concretely, this meant that Afrikaners not only lost much of their property, but also suffered a great blow to their pride. On top of that, the Afrikaner Free Staters, who lost the three-year war and suffered significant losses, were very divided in their political stance towards Britain. Some wanted nothing to do with the English and their language, while others believed in its potential for success. For the first 80

years and more, the University was a fully white institution. The constitution of the Free State Republic, which was in force from 1854 to 1902, prescribed that only white people were official citizens of the Orange Free State and this was still the practice in 1904. It would in fact continue until the 1980s. In the 1980s, the first black students were accorded full status as UFS students (UFS, 2006, p. 5). Back in 1904, with the ABW fresh in people's minds, exhausted Free Staters believed higher education could be the key to success for the impoverished Afrikaners and thus demanded local further study. The institution would grow into a vital link in the country's tertiary education system (UFS, 2006, p. 6).

There were various reasons why this institution was established. Firstly, Free State political leaders wanted Free State pupils to receive tertiary education in their own region. Especially President Reitz and Steyn wanted the establishment of an Afrikaner nationalist university. However, because of the ABW, the Free State lost its independence and the demands for a Dutch-language university thwarted. Nonetheless, the politicians of the time still recognised the establishment of a fully-fledged university as vital. A second reason for the establishment of the University is that since 1892, students were being prepared for the Cape Intermediate BA examinations by being allowed to do the first year of the degree at Grey College school. Thereafter, they could complete the degree in Cape Town (UFS, 2006, p. 9). At the time, the University of the Cape of Good Hope was the only recognized examining body in South Africa (Boucher, 1973, p. 98). Dr Johannes Brill started this programme which was solely in English, because the examination was in English and the available teachers were English-speaking. This programme basically formed the foundation of what would later become a university (UFS, 2006, p. 11). Another reason which contributed to the establishment of this institution at the time that it did was a decision made at an education conference held in June 1903, shortly after the ABW. At the conference the departments of the four colonies agreed on establishing a single South African University. The provinces would be served by provincial campuses, where their students would be taught. The Free State was then known as the Orange River Colony and its Education Ordinance of 1903 made public funds

available to offer subjects usually taught at universities (Strydom & Holtzhausen, 2001, p. 15). This allowed for building a University College. The following three processes allowed for the establishment of the University: the idealism of the political leaders, the passionate teachers who believed in further education and the support of the British occupying force in helping the Free Staters realise their ideal (UFS, 2006, p. 13).

The Free State government employed four British professors; hence the medium of instruction was necessarily English (UFS, 2006, p. 15). In 1906, a special milestone was reached. The tertiary part of Grey College was for the first time called Grey University College (GUC) (Petzer, 2013). From then on, it became clear that the institution would develop into a fully-fledged University. 1906 was also the year in which the first Senate became a reality (UFS, 2006, p. 17). In 1908, the GUC and Grey College school became two independently operating institutions. The isolation caused by the move, was a catalyst for innovations. Students decided to take the initiative and started a tradition of student life. The Student's Representative Council was established (UFS, 2006, p. 18). On 30 April 1910, the GUC was officially recognised as an independent institution for higher education via the Act no 5 promulgated by the Legislative Assembly of the Orange River Colony (Boucher, 1973, p. 102; Petzer, 2013). This act made no provision for black people in its management or administration (UFS, 2006, p. 27). Another important event in the history of the University was the appointment of John Daniël Kestell as Rector on 1 October 1920. The GUC was then poor, struggling and without Rector to ensure progress. The institution only had 130 students. Kestell was an Afrikaner cultural leader and aimed to attract more Afrikaans students while also obtaining financial support from the public and regaining the lost support of English speaking parents. He was the child of an Afrikaner mother and an English father who was a settler from Devonshire. Kestell was also a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and studied at the universities of Stellenbosch and Utrecht in the Netherlands (Lunderstedt, 2016). He travelled untiringly to convince people that GUC should be their first choice in their pursuit of scholarship, rather than Stellenbosch University. He succeeded in

his efforts to increase student numbers and raise funds as well as winning the hearts of English speakers (UFS, 2006, p. 22).

3.2.3 1927-1950: University College of the Orange Free State

From 1904 until 1927, the University was going through a founding phase without major issues. The most problematic challenges were low student numbers, financial difficulties and the medium of instruction. When Prof DF Malherbe was appointed as Rector in 1928, a new era was introduced. Political changes influenced the University's progress. There existed differences in opinion between the two white political parties, the National Party (NP) and the United Party (UP), which divided the students and lecturers on campus. A merger of most of Prime Minister Barry Hertzog's National Party with the rival South African Party of Jan Smuts as well as the Unionist Party formed the United Party. Some Afrikaner nationalists refused to accept the merger and maintained a Purified National Party. Also during Prof Malherbe's days of reign, the language debate started. Afrikaner nationalism became increasingly popular and Afrikaners who had completed their GUC studies, had great influence on the matter (UFS, 2006, p. 85).

Despite the improving circumstances since 1927, the growth of the GUC was painfully slow until 1950. The Free State did not support its own institution for higher learning. In 1930, there were 327 students, by 1940 this had risen to 573 and in 1950 there were still only 1056 students. Neither Rev JD Kestell, George M Hofmeyer nor DF Malherbe were able to really build a close relationship between the University and the Free State as Rectors (UFS, 2006, p. 155). Several issues arose between 1927 and 1950. The first one was the change of name for the GUC. In 1935, the name GUC was changed to The University College of the Orange Free State (UCOFS) because Council believed that this name was more in line with the service the institution provides. Also, Council aspired to entrench the idea in the minds of the population that the institution belongs to the Orange Free State province and is therefore entitled to their interests and support (UFS, 2006, pp. 125–126). This name is in fact immortalised in the history of the University, since its students are up until today referred to as 'Kovsies' (Petzer, 2013). Another

issue was the language struggle. As mentioned, language became an issue in the late 1920s. DF Malherbe and allies were in favour of an Afrikaans College while others were proponents of a bilingual institution (UFS, 2006, p. 126). At that stage, Afrikaans held a weak position at the College. Although 80% of the students were Afrikaans-speaking, most courses were taught in English. In 1932, the bilingual University of Pretoria became Afrikaans, which led people to demand the GUC to make a choice. DF Malherbe did not succeed in collecting support from the members of the Senate and the Council in his quest to grow Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. RB Saayman succeeded him in June 1934. He stood up for both the English and the Afrikaans population groups. During Saayman's years in office, the language debate gained momentum. DF Malherbe who was still a member of the Senate received increased support from students (UFS, 2006, p. 127). While the university was striving for equal language representation in 1943, the Student Council decided they wanted to break away from UCOFS and its language policy and Students wanted to attend other Afrikaans institutions. The Council withdrew the notion of equal representation and the Minister of Education reconstituted the Council. Prof H van der Merwe Scholtz was appointed as the new Rector and he oversaw the phasing out of the policy of dual medium instruction (UFS, 2006, p. 128). Thereafter, UCOFS/UOFS would be Afrikaans for decades to come. This increased the interest for the UCOFS. Afterwards, the institution developed into a fully-fledged university in 1950 (Petzer, 2013; UFS, 2006, p. 128).

3.2.4 1950-1976: University of the Orange Free State

The third phase started off with the independence of the University on 18 March 1950 by a private Act of Parliament and was since known as the University of the Orange Free State (Strydom & Holtzhausen, 2001, p. 16). During the next 25 years, the UOFS grew from a university with 1000 students to one with more than 7000 students in eight faculties and more than 90 academic departments. During this period, the University expanded drastically in physical form as well thanks to the financial support from the National Party Government. Accommodating the growing number of students was probably the biggest challenge at that time. During this uncomplicated growth period of

the institution, the Apartheid government ruled. This resulted in a demand from society for mainly white public servants and teachers trained in Afrikaans. That was exactly the graduates the University delivered (Strydom & Holtzhausen, 2001, p. 17; UFS, 2006, p. 161).

3.2.5 1976-1989: First steps in the direction of a transformed, all-inclusive university

The fourth phase was characterised by a lot of changes due to the events happening in the broader South African society. There were the Soweto and other riots of 1976, the establishment of the Tricameral Parliament in the mid-1980s, the era of State President PW Botha, states of emergency and the 'total boycott' against South Africa, as well as the riots of the 1980s. The country's political situation of the 1980s had an influence on the development of the University. Initially, the University tried to avoid or resist the implications of the changing circumstances, however, eventually changes were implemented to facilitate the admission of all students, which led to the commencement of transformation (UFS, 2006, p. 255).

Since the beginning of the 1980s, university facilities had been requested for the majority black community in the Bloemfontein region. At first, UOFS adhered to these requests, within the framework of the Apartheid legislation, by supporting the black community via the establishment of Vista University. Later, they slowly opened their doors to everyone (Strydom & Holtzhausen, 2001, pp. 17–18).

In 1923, a black person had applied for studies at the University, but the Council refused admission. Ten years later, in 1933, another black man asked permission to attend classes in Roman Law. Also, this request was turned down. However, in the same year, 1933, Jacob Nhlapo's request that he be allowed to do his practical examination in Geology in the College's laboratory was granted. Later, in 1945, access to part-time studies was denied to a group of black people because Council was worried that allowing them could lead to them demanding student privileges. Eventually in 1976, the door to admission was slightly opened. It was decided that qualifying black students

would be allowed to register for postgraduate studies on the condition that they could not do so at a black university (UFS, 2006, p. 263). This rule was inspired by a constraint established by the National Party government. Students were not allowed to enrol at an institution that did not serve their race. They could only register at an institution which was not designated to their race if the institution obtained a permit from the Department of Education. These permits were only granted when the applicant's proposed programme of study was not offered at their 'own' institution (Bunting, 2006, p. 37). In 1977, two 'coloured' and one black student registered for the degrees MEd and MA. They were only allowed to write a dissertation or thesis. They were not allowed to attend classes. Mr JG Masihleho was the first black student to attend classes in 1978 (UFS, 2006, p. 263). He did a master's degree in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. On 27 October 1980, the Council made the decision to allow all postgraduate students of all racial groups to attend the University and by the start of 1982, there were about 30 black students (UFS, 2006, p. 264).

These decisions should be seen in the light of the South African political situation at the time. South Africa experienced mass actions of Black Nationalism, which were not recognised by then Prime Minister, PW Botha. He influenced the public to be passive and uncritical. These attitudes also reflected on campus. The majority supported PW Botha's views while only a few progressive academics wanted UOFS to become a non-racial institution. This was a source of a lot of tension between conservative and progressive academics. It should be remembered that the University and its people, as well as the majority of white people in the Free State originated from a historically conservative school of thought, formed in the early days of the University and strengthened by the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s. Consequently, it is not surprising that there was no support for a black ANC government, neither the release of Nelson Mandela nor democracy (UFS, 2006, pp. 307–308). Furthermore, at that time, public higher education institutions were considered a legal entity that was brought into existence by the state and could therefore also be terminated by the state. They thus adhered to the rules that racially divided the higher education

system (Bunting, 2006, p. 37). UOFS did not take the intellectual lead in the political transformation or the establishment of a non-racial society.

Eventually, in 1984, it was decided that black students would be allowed to register for undergraduate courses, again, on the condition that the course was not offered at their 'own' universities. In 1985, a limited number of undergraduate students of non-white origin were allowed to register for any subjects. These students had to abide by the same standards as white students. Some of the pioneers were disappointed about the way they were treated on campus. Some also struggled financially and in terms of transport. Later on, conditions for acceptance became more lenient. On 24 August 1990, it was decided by Council that all restrictions would be removed and that the University would be completely open to everyone. This was the start of transformation and the changing character of the UOFS after 1990 (UFS, 2006, pp. 264–265).

3.3 UFS: TRANSFORMATION TIMELINE

3.3.1 Introduction

In 2012, UFS published their Strategic Plan for 2012-2016 (UFS, 2012b). Transformation is an important focus of this plan and infuses both UFS' Academic and Human Projects. Transformation covers several dimensions at UFS (UFS, 2012b, p. 17).

Firstly, UFS is working on demographics. UFS' student population is more than 70% black, however, the majority of its academics remain white and male (UFS, 2012b, p. 17). Secondly, when an institution goes through a transformation process, it is important to express this through necessary symbolic reparation. UFS changed its university logo as well as its institutional statute which now reflect the diversity of a public institution (UFS, 2012b, p. 17). It is also initiating other symbol change processes with regards to artwork on campus, etc. A third dimension is democratisation and deracialisation of the campus. UFS management has created a culture that allows for everyone to participate in the making of decisions by establishing forums such as town

hall meetings, the Monday bulletins, the open-door policy, the frequent visits to residences and departments, the talk-to-me sessions with the rector and much more. Creating a non-racial campus which is marked by respect and human embrace is also part of this third transformation dimension (UFS, 2012b, p. 17). Lastly, UFS is committed to creating a culture of intellectual diversity. This is necessary to successfully achieve deep transformation. An important tool for achieving intellectual diversity is the offering of a full-credit, compulsory, interdisciplinary, undergraduate programme that stimulates students to engage with major intellectual questions (UFS, 2012b, p. 18).

UFS published a transformation report in 2014 titled *Looking back into the future: a transformation report of the UFS 2004-2014* (UFS, 2014) in which it presents the transformation challenges it faced and the efforts made to achieve a more transformed university. UFS has massively invested in its academic and social transformation project. It is committed to the complexities of transformation in a well-structured fashion. UFS has thus become a model for institutional and social transformation. There are several specific attempts that UFS makes at transformation, as it strives to become a space where politics of inclusivity, decency and proximity rule (UFS, 2014).

3.3.1.1 Transformation in numbers

If you look at the transformation of UFS in figures, you get a sense of how enormous and therefore complex this process has been and still is. Between 1990 and 2004, UFS' student body grew from 9300 students to 25351. During this period, UFS transformed from being an Afrikaans-medium historically white institution serving a 95.8% white student population into a parallel-medium university populated with only 35.28% white students (UFS, 2014, p. 15). Today, UFS has about 72% black student enrolments out of a total enrolment figure of about 33000 students. Also, gender wise, there has been a large increase of female students, which has posed specific challenges as well (UFS, 2014, p. 17).

3.3.1.2 Transformation complexities

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) Audit report, which was published in 2008, revealed the intricacies of transformation at UFS (UFS, 2014). According to the report, the massive changes undergone by the UFS between 1990 and 2004 manifested in racial conflicts, but also in a decrease of the quality of the academic offerings. Lecturers were expected to offer lectures in both Afrikaans and English due to the fact that UFS became a parallel-medium university. This was not a straightforward process. Some lecturers were not proficient in English, which resulted in an academic challenge. Simultaneously, the language policy created another challenge. The fact that black students attended English lectures, while white students attended Afrikaans lectures created a social problem.

“Social life is a crucial aspect of the total student experience at a university and it defines the quality of education as much as curricular experiences do. The Panel is concerned that some of the academic staff who were interviewed did not see a connection between the curricular and the non-curricular aspects of education, such as institutional culture, and therefore, did not consider the current state of affairs a risk to the University’s core activities” (UFS, 2014, p. 23).

The audit report can be summarised into three dominant problems: the quality of the academic offerings of UFS, the quality of the social life and the conceptualisation of the interface between both.

3.3.1.3 Strategic transformation efforts

Now that I have addressed the specific challenges faced by the UFS in the context of transformation, I will look into efforts to improve the situation. These transformation efforts clarify the different strategies that the UFS follows to contribute to a more socially just university. The IRSJ forms an important part of that strategy. These efforts are reflected in the vision and mission of the UFS as well as in its Strategic Plan (UFS, 2012b). Firstly, I will look at transformation at UFS with regards to the academic project. According to the HEQC Audit Report, the UFS can be characterised as an institution whose performances are acceptable, yet its academic identity is unclear. This is due

to the fact that the UFS is neither an excellent undergraduate teaching university nor an excellent research university (UFS, 2014, p. 26). The Strategic Plan of the UFS, which was published in 2012, announced that UFS would become a top research and teaching university. In order to achieve these goals, UFS developed a core undergraduate curriculum (UFS101), which is built to improve the coherence and consistency within a university of modularised programmes. UFS also developed a process of review of the curriculum with a technical and conceptual focus. The technical focus aims to streamline the curriculum and align it with the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework. The conceptual focus rather aims to benchmark the curriculum against high disciplinary standards (UFS, 2014, p. 29).

I would like to elaborate on the UFS101 topic because it is a transformation strategy unique to the UFS. The intention of the module is to influence students by more challenging types of learning, so that they demand higher quality education and therefore develop into catalysts of change (UFS, 2014, p. 29).

Curriculum review has as a goal improving the intellectual coherence as well as progressing the knowledge. Simultaneously, the knowledge content is being benchmarked and peer reviewed. All these efforts will hopefully help renew UFS' undergraduate curriculum (UFS, 2014).

In the last few years, following the HEQC audit report, UFS has attempted to upgrade the quality of teaching of its staff (UFS, 2014). An important part of this process has been improving the educationally productive communication in the classroom. The University is able to open the minds of their students as well as staff members, simply by helping differing people with dissimilar perceptions of the world and each other, different knowledge(s) and contrasting personal vulnerabilities to connect.

A first step in aiding staff to improve their teaching was the creation of the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in 2012 (UFS, 2014). This centre's main focus is research. Research provides evidence for, on the one hand, the

effectiveness of suggested practices and, on the other hand, the impact of current practices. The research conducted with regards to student engagement informs day-to-day interventions to assist teachers to better their teaching and to help students enhance their learning at the university.

A second project that is conducive to improving the educationally productive communication at the University, is a collaboration between the IRSJ and the CTL. The 'Difficult Dialogues' project is meant to equip lecturers and facilitators to engage students in difficult dialogues. The IRSJ also offers its critical conversation series as well as collaborations with other UFS departments, which provide a platform for UFS staff and students to unite in light of diversity and inclusivity (UFS, 2014).

This concludes the measures taken by the UFS at the undergraduate level. On research and postgraduate levels, UFS is making significant progress. There has been a clear increase in research productivity. Simultaneously, the UFS tries, through a complex set of strategies, to increase intellectual diversity (UFS, 2014).

As part of improving its academic offerings, UFS increased its engagement with its context. Geographically, the UFS consists of three campuses, two historically black campuses (South campus and QwaQwa campus) and the historically white Bloemfontein campus. It was a structural challenge to integrate all campuses, yet UFS seems to be managing this well. South campus has become the School for Open Learning, which is a blooming project. The QwaQwa campus is a more complex situation. The fact that the campus is located in a rural area, as well as concerns about academic performance lead to a sense of "second classness" among QwaQwa academics. This situation prevented a good relationship with their Bloemfontein colleagues. QwaQwa campus is currently going through some serious transformation processes such as new academic initiatives, CTL supported programmes for the betterment of teaching and learning and a new academic leadership should contribute to a more transformed campus (UFS, 2014).

Furthermore, UFS executed a project, which researched the sense of belonging of the staff and students of the institution. This was an important step in assuring that UFS provides an enabling environment as it strives to improve the institution academically and socially. The Sense of Belonging Report was presented in 2010. The Report mostly offers a better institutional understanding with regards to the knowledge of the other (UFS, 2014).

Eventually, UFS also looked outside itself in order to transform. Institutions' identities are also dependent on how universities position themselves within society. Especially in recent years, the UFS has really opened itself up to the world. This has been an exciting process of first-year students journeying abroad, academic and research exchanges, international cooperation agreements, a diversity of visitors and a growing number of foreign students (UFS, 2014).

3.3.1.4 Transformation

During the last 10 years, student life has transformed drastically at the UFS. Based on recommendations from the HEQC Audit Report and the Soudien report, UFS has implemented a host of initiatives. Firstly, a policy of residential integration was implemented. This policy focused on attention to student sentiments and requirements as well as on staff perspectives. Also, student political participation has become part of the student life experience. Thirdly, UFS created new spaces for dialogue, reflection and justice on campus. UFS101 is one of those spaces, but also structures such as the Free State Centre for Human Rights (UFS, 2014). Consequently, students are more at ease with each other. Another project, which looks at the integration of on and off-campus students into an encouraging and structured space of learning outside the formal curriculum, is the College project. UFS strives for "excellence in human reconciliation" through care and communication. Care manifests itself through the No Student Hungry program, which helps financially constraint students to feed themselves appropriately.

Communication comes in many varieties at UFS. There's the Monday Bulletin sent out by the Rector, but there is also a direct interpersonal communication between students and management. The 'Talk to me' campaign is a great example and has even received numerous awards. The programme exists of the Rector regularly giving staff and students the opportunity to informally converse with him (UFS, 2014).

Eventually, UFS also adheres to the conceptualisation of the interface between the quality of academic packages and the quality of social life. This interplay is advanced by high profile lectures, discussion and projects. Examples are "the annual reconciliation lecture, the science and society lectures, faculty-based prestige lectures and departmental open seminars, the critical conversations series of the IRSJ, the open-mic sessions of the Student Representative Council, the plays and events driven by Student Life, the Winter School on Dignity and Difference, and the Arts and Social Justice week events" (UFS, 2014, p. 56). Other events include visits by, among others, Bishop Tutu and his family, Ngugi wa'Thiong'o, Thuli Madonsela, Neville Alexander, Jay Naidoo and Izzeldin Abullaish as well as the ANC centenary lecture series (UFS, 2014).

The *Looking back into the future: a transformation report of the UFS 2004-2014* report (UFS, 2014) reveals that the IRSJ contributes to transforming the quality of UFS' academic offerings by setting up the 'Difficult Dialogues' project in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Also, its critical conversation series as well as collaborations with other academic units at UFS are conducive in achieving transformation.

The IRSJ also contributes to transforming the social life of UFS. A structure such as the Human Rights Desk offers a safe space for staff and students to make their voices heard. Eventually, the IRSJ also plays a role in transforming the conceptualisation of the interface between academic offerings and the social life through its critical conversation series as well as its Arts and Social Justice Week events (UFS, 2014).

The transformation report evaluates these activities organised by the IRSJ positively by claiming that these have brought UFS students closer together. However, there is no empirical evidence for this claim (UFS, 2014).

In closing, the report suggests that there is still much work to be done to really reap the benefits of what has been realised until now. Therefore, the report recommends that the UFS and the IRSJ should continue to keep on readdressing the object, purpose and modalities of transformation in coordination with its environment. This will only be possible with the support of all its friends, near and far (UFS, 2014). When these efforts continue to be a priority, the UFS will become more legitimate. This means that the values that inform organisational activities will be more coherent with the widely accepted norms in the broader social system. If transformation initiatives are implemented successfully, they will procure cognitive legitimacy. UFS will thus be more desirable, proper and appropriate by its environment. Transformation initiatives can be considered legitimisation initiatives, which increase individual preference, strategic framing and local grounding for a transformed university.

3.3.2 1990s – mid-2000s

I will periodize the shifts in UFS' institutional identity in four phases, according to the transformation plan published by the UFS in 2014 (UFS, 2014). UFS finds its origins in 1904, when Grey University College was founded. In its initial stages, the institution was predominantly English in terms of medium of instruction. Only during the late 1940s, Afrikaans became the medium of instruction. This remained the case until 1993. This period is in this context, a second fundamental period in UFS' history, during which the institution supported a racially divided society. On 18 March 1950, the by then named University College of the Free State became an independent University named the University of the Orange Free State. In 1993, UFS became a dual language university and introduced a new university statute in 1999. Consequently, the student numbers grew largely. This marks the start of the third period. This period changed the institutional identity of UFS drastically. In 2001, the institution was renamed the University of the Free State. In the following years, the QwaQwa campus of the University of the North was

incorporated into the UFS as well as the Vista campus, which is now known as the South campus. These changes accumulated into the implementation of the University turnaround strategy. This third period in UFS' history included the HEQC institutional audit in 2006 and the Reitz incident in 2008. The Reitz incident caused a lot of negative publicity for the university, both nationally and internationally. It also served as a catalyst for drastic change (UFS, 2014).

3.3.3 Reitz and the Jansen interventions

3.3.3.1 Reitz

During UFS' third phase, based on its institutional identity shifts, which took place from 1993-2009, the student body changed drastically. The Bloemfontein campus changed from an all-white campus of fewer than 10000 students in the late 1980s to a campus of 24000 students. In 2015, 70% of this population was black. Nonetheless, the institutional culture remained Afrikaans and Christian (van der Merwe & van Reenen, 2016). There also existed a separation between black and white due to the fact that white students attended the Afrikaans lectures, while black students attended the English lectures. Racial segregation was even more explicit in the student residences, where students were accommodated in either a 'black' or 'white' dormitory. In the late 1990s, attempts were made to integrate these, however, those attempts were made in vain. Eventually, in 2007, the UFS Council adopted a policy which stated that residences on the Bloemfontein campus would be racially integrated by January 2008 (UFS, 2014). It was in the context of this announcement that the 'Reitz incident' took place. In August/September 2007, residences on the Bloemfontein campus hosted their annual 'cultural evenings'. The aim was for students to participate in activities such as dancing, singing, acting or poetry. That year, four students from the Reitz residence decided to make a video. The video was produced to voice their protest against integration at residences (van der Merwe & van Reenen, 2016).

In the video, four students from the President Reitz residence feature. They were males and their age ranged between 22 and 24. Aside from the students, five workers also feature in the video. They were four women and one man whose age ranged between 40 and 52 (van der Merwe & van Reenen, 2016). The students mention at the beginning of the video that they are being forced to integrate and therefore want to come up with their own selection process, which they want to show an example of in this video. The first activity of the selection process is 'down-downs', which is a drinking game in which they test who can drink a beer the fastest. Other activities included a running race and eating an unappetizing concoction. In the video, the students used derogatory words to address the workers. The unappetizing concoction allegedly included urine (van der Merwe & van Reenen, 2016). After the video accidentally became public, the video quickly made international news in headlines such as: 'Hostel of hate' (Schmulow, 2008), '609-second video of shameless race hate' (Gifford, 2008) and 'Kampus walgvideo' (H. Cloete, 2008). The Reitz video became the subject of a lot of public debate (van der Merwe & van Reenen, 2016).

Emmie Smit considered "the possibility of appreciating the Reitz debacle as a public catalyst to a wonderland of transformed identity" (Smit, 2013, p. 6) in her PhD dissertation *Appreciating the University of the Free State's transformation: A juxtaposed journey with Alice in Wonderland*. A consequence of the Reitz incident was dramatic actions of transformation at UFS which were so radical that they resulted in the World Universities Forum's 2011 Award for best Practice in Higher Education (Smit, 2013). This meant a change in UFS' identity as well as the identity of its personnel members and students. Smit investigated UFS' institutional culture and identity post-Reitz. The process of forming a transformed authentic and conscious identity is not straightforward. UFS' leadership was accused in the media of racism after the 2008 debacle. Shortly after the debacle, in an attempt to achieve a new normal, they participated in crisis management instead of exploring an authentic and conscious institutional identity (Smit, 2013).

Smit applies the Appreciative Inquiry Approach to what is generally considered a disaster in the existence of the University. Her study attributes UFS' journey to successfully achieving a new identity to changing the leadership of the institution. The leadership after the Reitz series of events was able to achieve the breakthrough to transformation in a short period of time. Therefore, she considers the Reitz video as the catalyst (Smit, 2013).

In February 2008, the university campus was severely vandalised overnight (van der Merwe & van Reenen, 2016). The students had collaborated to express their dislike of the newly implemented residence integration processes and practices. Shortly thereafter, the Reitz video reached national and international media. This led to the resignation of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Frederick Fourie, the standstill of residence integration, threats from Government to close down the institution, etc. However, this all turned around through profound leadership reform. After Prof Fourie's resignation, Prof Jonathan Jansen was appointed as Rector and Vice-Chancellor. This change of leadership introduced a new era (Smit, 2013).

3.3.3.2 New transformative leadership approach

In 2009, with the appointment of a new Rector, the fourth phase in the history of the UFS kicked-off. During this period, the focus on transformation increased, specifically, it became about "moving away from a public image of the UFS as a racist university to the UFS as a place of reconciliation, where the human embrace and democracy were possible as a backdrop to academic excellence" (UFS, 2014, pp. 11–13).

Prof Jansen's leadership style was different from his predecessor. Smit (2013, p. 83) described the change in leadership as "a change from a life-draining problem-focused leadership approach to a life-giving solution-focused leadership approach". She attributes his type of leadership as the contributor to successful transformation progress made at the University of the Free State, especially in the aftermath of the Reitz incident. In her research she compares Prof Jansen's leadership approach to that of his predecessor and gives an overview in Table 3.1. (Smit, 2013).

Leadership Styles	
Deficit-focused	Strength-focused
Problem-based	Asset-based
Characteristics: authoritarian, autocratic, negative, individualistic, reactive	Characteristics: collaborative, sharing, co- creating, appreciative, positive
Motivation: External external pressure & expectations	Motivation: Internal intrinsic dreams & values
Alignment: schism-creating: WE vs. THEM WE strongly condemn THEM WE distance ourselves from THEM	Alignment: unity creating: I & US I apologize on behalf of the HEI I cannot deny MY students
Associated styles: Conflict Management Crisis Management Risk Management	Associated styles: Transformation Management Appreciative Management Authentic Management

Table 3.1: Leadership styles appropriation of deficit-based and value-based leadership (Smit, 2013)

Smit defines Prof Jansen’s leadership approach as the Authentic Leadership approach and perceives authenticity as

“A state in which an individual or institution enjoys the satisfaction of performing in the sphere of his/her/its own values and geniuses with adequate developed skills to achieve their ultimate and unique purpose of existence (Smit, 2013, p. 76).

She derived this perception from George’s (2007) Authentic Leadership theory.

Smit also highlights the importance of viewing her research in the specific context of higher education institutions today. They attract more diversified populations of both students and staff and therefore their institutional identity becomes more diverse as well. This requires diversity in leadership styles (Smit, 2013).

The Authentic Leadership approach reflected already in Prof Jansen’s inauguration speech, when he dreamed of a transformed university:

“Firstly, the university will become a place that exemplifies the scholarship and the practice of reconciliation, forgiveness and social justice. Scholars

and students from around the world will descend on the institution to study and understand the theory and practice of building community across the divides of race but also religion, gender, dis/ability, national origins and sexual identity. In this respect the University will soon launch what we hope to call The Reitz Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice. Secondly, the university will move very quickly to become a national and indeed international centre for academic excellence. While the UFS has great programmes in fields like chemistry, agriculture and medicine, we are acutely aware of the need to dramatically scale up the academic standards of a promising institution” (Hartley, 2009).

The traditional approach, which was problem-focussed (i.e. crisis management) made way for Prof Jansen’s more strength-focussed approach. Following a strength-focussed path is appreciative in nature. His speech also reflected that he proactively wanted “to steer the UFS towards healing, forgiveness and social justice through shared ownership of the UFS’ institutional culture” (Hartley, 2009). In light of the appreciative approach, he recognised mistakes and admits that “we as an institution failed” and therefore recognised “as the head of this institution, I apologise to you” (Hartley, 2009). His leadership recognises every member of the UFS community and he therefore said “those four students who committed that heinous act, are my students” (Hartley, 2009). It goes to show that he practises a positive, non-authoritarian and non-competitive appreciative management approach. This led to his dream becoming a reality in January 2011 when Archbishop Desmond Tutu opened the Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice as well as when UFS was awarded the WUF Award (Smit, 2013).

3.4 INSTITUTE FOR RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (IRSJ)

3.4.1 Establishment of the IRSJ

On 26 February 2008, the discovery of a video changed UFS’ campus life drastically. The video was made by students at the Reitz residence in protest against the transformation process. This incident severely damaged UFS’

public image (UFS, 2012a). Later the same year, on 27 May, UFS announced the shutdown of the Reitz residence. UFS intended to launch an Institute for Diversity (ID) on the grounds of the former hostel. Eventually, on the 30th of July, the Reitz residence was officially closed. On 20 November 2008, the inaugural meeting of the advisory panel for the (International) Institute for Diversity took place. This meeting was organised by Brian Gibson Issue Management (BGIM) and facilitated by the International Institute for Development and Ethics (IIIDE). The people who attended this meeting were experts on topics such as diversity, transformation, change management and conflict management. They provided advice on the establishment of the ID (UFS, 2012a). The Office of the Rector requested that the Chief Directorate: Community Service (CDCS) would offer organisational support for the setting up of the ID. From then on, CDCS and the (acting) Rector consulted with one another on a regular basis and compiled discussion documents regarding the ID, which was directed to the UFS Management. Many others provided input during the period leading up to the establishment of the ID, such as the Director of Research and Development as well as the Director of Internationalisation (UFS, 2012a). Furthermore, Prof Josephine Allen gave her input. At the time, she was a visiting Fulbright scholar who was assigned with researching transformation at the UFS. Following her report, the acting Rector submitted a discussion document to the Executive Committee (EXCO) to be approved (UFS, 2012a). Once approved, the document was forwarded to the Executive Management (EM) of the UFS. From then onwards, the ID took shape quickly. On May 4th 2009, the EM approved the EXCO document and an Interim Management Committee (IMC) commissioned with facilitating the establishment of the ID was created. The very first meeting of the IMC took place on 27 May 2009. On the 5th of September 2009, a meeting of a second advisory panel was held. The invitees for this meeting were experts on diversity, transformation and conflict management. On the 16th of October 2009, Prof Jansen was inaugurated as the new Vice-Chancellor and Rector of the UFS. In his inaugural lecture, he announced the establishment of the Reitz Institute for Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice. Prof Jansen made sure that no time was wasted. On 25 November 2009, a colloquium was co-hosted by the Research Cluster: "Transformation in Highly Diverse Societies

and the Reitz Institute for Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice”. The next day, the interim management committee of the Reitz Institute for Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice took place. At the beginning of 2010, the Rector tasked several people with the formalities that had as a goal the legal origination of the International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice. The setting-up phase of the Institute kicked off in June 2010 with Mr John Samuel as the Interim Director. The Institute was eventually launched by Archbishop Tutu on 27 January 2011(UFS, 2012a).

Prof André Keet, director of the IRSJ, looks back on how ‘Reitz’ gave UFS an ‘event’ to label the huge transformation challenges within Higher Education in South Africa (UFS, 2013). Due to this incident, the way UFS looks at society has changed greatly. It raised questions about hate behaviours and structural inequalities. Thus, this forces UFS to look at new ways of ‘thinking’, ‘knowing’ and ‘doing’ in a society that represents ‘human rights’ and ‘human suffering’ simultaneously. At the IRSJ, these ‘new forms’ are the main intellectual challenge (UFS, 2013).

Since the beginning, the IRSJ focussed on researching ‘race’, reconciliation and social justice as well as institutional transformation. This still forms the basis of the IRSJ’s framework (UFS, 2013).

3.4.2 Activities of the IRSJ

The IRSJ reports about its activities in their annual reports. In the IRSJ’s first report, Prof André Keet mentions that the IRSJ has become definite around two imperatives, being researching on race, reconciliation and social justice as well as institutional transformation. He adds that the IRSJ is a flexible space whose mandate and activities are inspired by the challenges its environment faces (UFS, 2012a).

The IRSJ was initially established with the intention to become “a centre of academic excellence for studying transformation and diversity in society”. This intention remained when the IRSJ was launched in 2011:

“It is the mission of the Institute to study the manifestations of race in higher education, linking such inquiry to the related matters of reconciliation and social justice in the South African context against the backdrop of racial, ethnic and tribal conflicts elsewhere in the world.” (UFS, 2012a, p. 13).

One of the first projects set up by the IRSJ was a series of conversations, which had as theme: “imagining a reconciled diversity” (UFS, 2012a). These conversations aimed to, firstly, understand which space on campus caused separation between students and which spaces had the power to bring students together. Secondly, these conversations tried to understand both divergence and convergence within the broader society. Eventually, they tried to compile a foresight for the youth of South Africa.

In an attempt to generate new approaches to race, the IRSJ invited during 2009-2011 university faculty members and students to take part in critical conversations. Other activities included Dialogue with a visitor, talking movies, Courtyard Conversations, etc. (UFS, 2012a).

The year 2012 was a very formative year for the IRSJ, because its structure and functions were sharpened and its research portfolio took shape. The IRSJ responded to the needs of its environment by establishing two focus areas, being human rights and higher education transformation. Aside from producing research output, the IRSJ also aimed to build a vibrant intellectual culture through its activities. In 2012, the IRSJ’s name also changed from the International Institute for Studies in Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice to the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice (UFS, 2013).

Also in 2012, the IRSJ continued to host Critical Conversations. The purpose of these conversations is to join local and international scholars from all disciplines in public dialogue about reconciliation and social justice related matters. These conversations established the IRSJ as one of the leading centres for intellectual discussion on the Bloemfontein campus. The IRSJ claims that these conversations were vibrant and very well-received.

Furthermore, the IRSJ hosted Courtyard Conversations which were informal yet very popular. The IRSJ also organised other events such as conversations about books as well as co-hosted events. During March 2012, the IRSJ took a stand against hate crimes and human rights violations related to sexual orientation, by holding an LGBTIQ week. During this week, they screened the film 'if these walls could talk II' and held a panel discussion. The Winter School on Pluralism and Development hosted an international group of participants from civil society based organisations, activists and graduate students. Also, the Arts and Social Justice Week was a highlight. The purpose of this event was exploring innovative and different ways of understanding social relations (UFS, 2013).

Prof Jansen reflects on the IRSJ as one of the UFS' central academic initiatives that focuses on the 'human embrace'. The IRSJ is therefore not a traditional space within the context of a university; instead its research framework is creative and innovative (UFS, 2013).

3.4.3 The role of the IRSJ in the Human Project of the UFS

The Strategic Plan 2012-2016 (UFS, 2012b) of the UFS, mentions that the arrival of Prof Jansen as Rector and Vice-Chancellor has resulted in large changes across the University. Firstly, academic standards have been increased. Furthermore, the UFS has become an institution that confronts social issues and does not hide from putting itself under the academic microscope. These two aspects are referred to as the Academic and the Human Projects respectively. For the purpose of this dissertation, I will focus on the Human Project (UFS, 2012b, pp. 3–4).

The vision and mission statement of the UFS clearly indicates that the human aspect of education is very important to this institution (UFS, 2012b). Consequently, UFS invests a great amount of resources in advancing human reconciliation of which the IRSJ is an important part. Five core values underpin the UFS' Academic and Human Project. These are "superior scholarship, human embrace, institutional distinctiveness, emergent leadership and public service". The human embrace core concept refers to

“UFS being a place where campus struggles are engaged and behaviour transformed through human embrace” (UFS, 2012b, p. 11). In practice, this means that students and staff are motivated to resolve any differences through the symbols of embrace.

The Human Project entails a set of initiatives in light of transforming the UFS from a location of racial tension and prejudice to a place that is an example for society through a process of understanding and reconciliation (UFS, 2012b, p. 14). This project has been grouped into four clusters being confronting prejudice, the culture of inclusion, equity, openness and access as well as community service (UFS, 2012b, p. 32). Confronting prejudice is all about meeting a diversity of people across ethnic, gender, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, faith and even faculty boundaries (UFS, 2012b, p. 32). One of the tools employed by UFS to confront prejudice is the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice (UFS, 2012b, p. 34). This Institute was established in order to strengthen the human project through research, teaching and intervention (UFS, 2012b, p. 34).

3.4.4 The role of the IRSJ and similar outfits in society

According to Soudien (2011), South African universities are an interesting study subject for understanding how such institutions deal with questions of change and transformation. This is due to the country’s social situation, which intensifies the question of what it means to be human, in comparison to other countries. Soudien believes that universities generally “promote a narrow view of what kinds of human knowledge is valuable (epistemological question) and a similarly narrow view of the ideal human subject (ontological question)” (Soudien, 2011, p. 16). He considers this train of thought unproductive and considers a “reconceptualization of knowledge and learning in educational policies and practices in contemporary 21st-century societies” (Soudien, 2011, p. 16) to be necessary. He believes “a culture that is inclusive, respectful of all our social and cultural differences and which is aware of the dependent relationships humans have with their wider natural and physical environment” (Soudien, 2011, p. 16) needs to be what is strived for.

South Africa deals with several development challenges. It is important that the country and its universities contribute to the betterment of the country and therefore tackle these challenges. According to Soudien (2011), there are two major kinds of initiatives which contribute to development within South Africa's higher education community. Firstly, initiatives influencing discrimination, racism and social cohesion and secondly, initiatives related to teaching and learning (Soudien, 2011). Only the first kind is relevant to this dissertation.

Within universities, important institutional, programmatic and research moves have existed and continue to be created. Part of these important initiatives is the establishment of institutes such as the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) in 2001. This is an interdisciplinary institute at the University of the Witwatersrand (WiSER, 2017). One of WISER's first initiatives was hosting a conference on 'The Burden of Race? "Whiteness" and "Blackness" in Modern South Africa'. The establishment of WISER initiated other initiatives such as the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape in 2006 (Centre for Humanities Research, 2014) as well as the Institute for Humanities in Africa (HUMA) at the University of Cape Town in 2010 (Institute for Humanities in Africa, 2017). Both institutes have a significant interest in the Humanities and deal with what it means to be human.

Other important institutional developments were established at the Universities of the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Witwatersrand, Cape Town, the University of South Africa and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. All these institutions explicitly engage with legacy questions of the country, particularly those of race. The oldest of these is iNCUDISA, the Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa at UCT. Its central purpose is framed as being to "contribute to equitable societal transformation and entrenching democracy through its socially responsible research and education, and by building capacity related to social diversity" (Institute for Intercultural & Diversity Studies Unit of Southern Africa, 2017). Other initiatives which have come into being are the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the Apartheid

Archive Project at the University of the Witwatersrand and the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racism and Democracy (CANRAD) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) (Soudien, 2011). The CCRR primarily studies “race thinking and changing identities”, in order to understand and discuss “the epistemological, moral, cultural and other basis for perceptions of human diversity and difference” (Soudien, 2011, p. 25). The Apartheid Archive Project is a research initiative, which has as its main objective “examin(ing) the nature of the experiences of racism of (particularly ‘ordinary’) South Africans under apartheid and their continuing effects... in contemporary South Africa” (Soudien, 2011, p. 25). CANRAD focuses on building a non-racial orientation to knowledge production and contributing to transformation through hosting difficult dialogues. The IRSJ at the UFS is a similar but younger initiative.

Soudien (2011) believes that the most important contribution made by South African academics, is concerned with the racial inflexions placed on identity. This discussion is fundamentally important because the rest of the world experiences its relevance. The various projects systematically deal with the etymology of racial subjecthood and how it is formed. Central to this approach is the concept of racial construction. The South African discussion focuses on how this process of social construction works. The main conclusion of this discussion is that “race as a concept only has that value which society wishes to place on it and that nothing about it, outside of this sociology of imposition, is of inherent consequence” (Soudien, 2011, p. 29). The politics of the imposition of race is problematic, in that in South Africa, as is in the rest of the world, race is naturalised. It is the politics of this naturalisation that institutes such as the IRSJ seek to engage with through deliberate reflections. In the past, the higher education system in South Africa has not fulfilled this responsibility. Therefore, the contribution of the South African focus on the human subject, through outfits similar to the IRSJ, cannot be stressed enough (Soudien, 2011).

3.5 LINKING UFS TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL THRUSTS

The UFS has made serious efforts to transform its campuses, but has nonetheless faced challenges. The UFS has been tackling its language policy as that is considered a tool to either facilitate or avoid transformation. Prof Jonathan Jansen believes that some historically white universities use language to avoid transformation. He said “somebody must tell these campus leaders that in the wake of our horrific racist past, white-dominant campuses in this country are morally unacceptable, demographically unjust and educationally dangerous. Afrikaans as a language is vital to our multilingual democracy, and must expand, but as the handmaiden of social justice, not racial exclusion” (MacGregor, 2014).

The main topics of conflict at South African universities have been language and admissions policies. The University of Cape Town’s innovative student admission policy was approved in June 2014 after years of disputation. That policy deploys three mechanisms for selecting students. The first part of the class is chosen based on academic performance, the second part of the class is chosen based on performance and ability while taking account of school and home background while the last group is chosen based on race and academic performance in order to meet demographic targets. Also Russel Botman, late Vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University pushed tirelessly to introduce a more flexible language policy before he passed on (MacGregor, 2014).

In August 2015, shortly before the #FeesMustFall protests, there were incidents of student violence at several South African universities. Both at the Tshwane University of Technology and the University of the Witwatersrand there were incidents during student election events, while at Stellenbosch University there were incidents in protest of the language policy led by the ‘Open Stellenbosch’ movement. The Open Stellenbosch is “a collective of students and staff working to purge the oppressive remnants of apartheid in pursuit of a truly African university” (Makoni, 2015). Students complained that

the language policy disadvantages students who lack Afrikaans knowledge. The policy said that “Stellenbosch contributes to multilingualism in such a way that Afrikaans as an academic language can be used, safeguarded and advanced, while utilising the value of English as an international academic language and a common language for the many speakers of other indigenous South African languages” (Makoni, 2015).

Also, the UFS has been facing language policy related struggles for many years. Unfortunately, the racism expressions at UFS as well as the other Afrikaans heritage universities, such as the universities of Pretoria, Stellenbosch and North-West are not just isolated experiences which were sparked in the time since the protests against language policy in 2015. The documentary ‘Luister’ released in 2015, which exposed the racial condition at Stellenbosch University made it clear that language is still used as a systematic tool in justifying racial expression by students (Rantao, 2016). Recent protests at the University of Pretoria has caused a tense atmosphere on the University campus (Rantao, 2016).

In 2016, following several protests against Afrikaans as a language of instruction, the universities of Free State, Pretoria and Stellenbosch adopted new language policies. Stellenbosch University’s new language policy supports multilingualism, whereby both Afrikaans and English will enjoy equal status. The University of Pretoria however made English the primary medium of instruction and assessment. Stellenbosch University wants this policy to confirm that they are committed to engaging with knowledge in a diverse society. The University of Pretoria believes that its new language policy will facilitate social cohesion and promote inclusivity. Meanwhile, the University of the Free State decided to move from parallel language instruction to English. However, this decision was challenged by Afriforum, and its trade union Solidarity together with amici which is the Afrikaanse Taalraad, the Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools and the South African Teacher’s Union, to no avail (Makoni, 2016b).

3.6 THEORETICAL GUIDANCE: LEGITIMATION

3.6.1 Description and relevance to this study

Van der Merwe and van Reenen (2016) argue that, since UFS' first attempts at transformative action, its governing bodies have been going through a 'legitimation crisis'. Despite attempts of the UFS to present a positive picture, the general unease in light of racial integration in residences exposed the true reality. It was therefore a delegitimising climate that allowed for the Reitz saga to occur. This shows the value of legitimacy in institutions, but it is difficult to define. Habermas (1976, p. 181) defines legitimacy as "the congruence between the values that inform organisational activities and the widely accepted norms in the broader social system" . If there is coherence between these norms, high levels of organisational legitimacy occur. Boxenbaum (2008) outlines four different categories of legitimation in organisations. Firstly, pragmatic legitimacy is based on a cost-benefit model. Stakeholders who experience many benefits are more likely to support the institution. Furthermore, socio-political legitimacy occurs when legal authorities, government and other powerful organisations or key players offer their endorsement. Thirdly, moral legitimacy is based on doing the right thing as an organisation. Lastly, cognitive legitimacy occurs when an organisation is framed as desirable, proper and appropriate within a widely accepted system of norms.

The successful implementation of the transformation initiatives of the UFS, which are novel ideas, would procure cognitive legitimacy (Boxenbaum, 2008). In the context of this research, I would like to find out how the IRSJ can contribute to procuring cognitive legitimacy at the UFS through its activities.

Boxenbaum (2008) states that three elements are involved in successfully implementing novel ideas. These are individual preference, strategic reframing and local grounding. A new frame provokes a personal reaction, which can be positive, negative or neutral. The transformation process of the UFS can be an attractive frame for some people while others do not feel any affinity for the beliefs and values that the process stands for. Institutions have

the power to influence these personal preferences, yet individuals have certain perceptions. Someone who grew up in a very conservative household is usually less likely to engage with the frame of transformation in the context of the UFS. It is relevant to know what attracts each legitimating actor to the frame. Strategic reframing aims to appeal to all key constituents using different strategies. This is possible by leveraging legitimate fields and events. Within the context of the IRSJ, we can consider events such as the Critical Conversations a leverage strategy to gather support for UFS' transformation processes. Local grounding is the dimension, which integrates the new frame with established local practices to make it continuous with daily operations (Boxenbaum, 2008).

3.6.2 Critical reflection (conversations) as a strategic reframing strategy

According to Habermas (1987), a university in a democracy has four responsibilities. The first is the transmission (instruction) and production (research) of technically exploitable knowledge. Secondly, a university is responsible for transmitting extra functional knowledge and abilities. Extra functional refers to all attributes, which cannot be obtained through conventional professional university training methods, yet are relevant when pursuing a professional career. These skills do not appear on certificates, but they are unwritten professional standards. A third responsibility is the transmission, interpretation and development of the cultural tradition of the society. Lastly, the university is responsible for forming the political consciousness of its students. This responsibility is not necessarily explicit, it can be part of the on-going character of the institution. None of these responsibilities can be excluded, because a university does not only relate to technology (purposive rational action), but also to practice (communicative action) (Habermas, 1987, pp. 1–4). It is the last three responsibilities, which are relevant for this study. These influence the action-orienting self-understanding of students. Since we want to educate our citizens of the university to become responsible global citizens, it is necessary to not only transmit and produce technically exploitable knowledge, but to democratise the university. Habermas substantiates his preference for the democratisation

of the university by trying to demonstrate the relation of the enterprise of knowledge on the university level to the democratic form of decision-making (Habermas, 1987, p. 5).

From theoretical knowledge, we can only derive rules for instrumental action, while practical knowledge is a matter of rules of communicative action. In this instrumentalist argument, politics does not belong at the university. Habermas (1987) argues that scientific inquiry should not only be judged under the logical conditions of the philosophy of science. We should examine critically the movement of inquiry rather than the results, so the approval of a procedure or the acceptance of a norm can be rationally assessed. This is the task of critical thought, both for metatheoretical and practical decisions (Habermas, 1987, pp. 6–7).

There is a difference between decisions that are made in practice, which establish the rules of communicative action, and decisions that are made within science, which establish the rules of instrumental action (Habermas, 1987). Yet, both decisions are supposed to be made rationally and free from constraints. Within political decision-making, there is only one generally accepted form of decision-making, the democratic form. This decision-making process is an important part of the scientific progress, just like democratic decision-making is important in practice. Within political democratic decision-making, the better argument should always prevail. Within the scientific progress, there is an element of decision-making, which should not be overlooked. This kind of decision-making is similar to the democratic form of political decision-making. They both follow the same principle, namely, only reason should have force. This is evidence of a unity of theoretical and practical reason and is specifically the universal power of philosophising, in the form of the self-reflection of the sciences themselves. In this dimension, it is no longer accepted that the unity of theoretical and practical reason does not hold for scientific theories themselves. The discipline that is philosophy can function in the role of an interpreter, by self-reflecting on the sciences (Habermas, 1987, pp. 7–8).

Thus, it can be considered philosophical enlightenment when a Critical Conversation at the IRSJ inspires academics from diverse disciplines. The main objective of these conversations is to explore new theoretical and practical approaches to social and political issues (IRSJ, 2013, p. 6). This sort of interaction allows academics and students from different disciplines to self-reflect and become critically aware that there is a world beyond their own disciplines. This thought process illustrates the universal power of philosophising. The Critical Conversations at the IRSJ are an example of a dimension in which the sciences practice reflection. It is in this dimension that it is possible to rationally fulfil those three functions, which the university must in some way deal with over and above the production and transmission of technically exploitable knowledge, for three reasons:

Firstly, only in this dimension can we promote the replacement of traditional professional ethics by a reflected relation of university graduates to their professional practice. Secondly, through this dimension we can raise consciousness, through reflection, about the relation of living generations to active cultural traditions. Finally, only in it can we subject to critical discussion both attitudes of political consequence and motives that form the university as a scientific institution and a social organisation (Habermas, 1987, p. 9).

Through this pedagogical method, it is therefore possible for UFS to become more cognitive legitimate through strengthening transformation processes at the UFS. It is possible in this dimension to raise consciousness and have critical discussions about the topic at hand.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with transformation at UFS and how this is linked to transformation processes at other South African institutions. It furthermore gave an overview of UFS' historical background and a transformation timeline. Also, the IRSJ was discussed. This included the history of the IRSJ's establishment, its activities, its role within the UFS and broader society. Inevitably, the theoretical guidance of this study was covered. The legitimisation

theory was used to guide the UFS in increasing its cognitive legitimacy by implementing transformation processes. I also discussed critical reflection as a pedagogical method in the context of the activities of the IRSJ, which in turn allow the IRSJ to gain cognitive legitimacy for the UFS.

The next chapter, chapter 4, deals with the research methodology, data collection and analysis process used in this study.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters provide the literature foundation of this study. I will now proceed to discuss the research design and methodology. This chapter will explain how the purpose of this study relates to the research questions as well as the followed procedures. It further explains the scope and the context of the study.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to seek answers to the main research question: *What is the contribution of the IRSJ to the transformation process at the UFS?* I opted for a qualitative approach. I realised that quantitative descriptions, which is what I am used to working with from my undergraduate business and sciences studies, would not be able to give the information necessary for this study. Therefore, I opted for a qualitative research approach, not quantitative. Supporting this decision is Merriam (2009, p. 3), who describes quantitative research as a study which focuses on how much or how many and which results are usually presented in numerical form. For this study, numerical data is not relevant in understanding how the IRSJ contributes to increase the comprehensibility of the transformation process at UFS, which cannot be quantified in numbers. Creswell (2007) defines qualitative research excellently. This kind of research starts off with assumptions and a worldview. Then, one studies a research problem to inquire into the meaning ascribed to a social problem. When a qualitative researcher studies this problem, a qualitative inquiry comes forth that includes data collection in people's natural habitat. The data analysis happens inductively and results in patterns or themes. The findings include the voices of the participants as well as a reflection by the researcher (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). Qualitative research has thus as purpose discovering the meaning behind a phenomenon. It also involves a variety of empirical materials, such as case studies, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artefacts, cultural texts and productions. All these materials are interconnected interpretive practices

which contribute to better understanding the subject matter at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 4). I am specifically interested in how the IRSJ contributes to the transformation process at UFS. Thus, interviews and personal experience as well as other empirical materials will allow me to discover that while numerical data cannot.

The type of qualitative research selected for this study is based on Merriam's classification scheme (Merriam, 2009, p. 3). In this scheme she classifies three forms of qualitative research: basic, applied evaluation and applied action (Merriam, 2009, p. 4). In a basic research study, the researcher is intellectually interested in a phenomenon and wants to extend knowledge about this phenomenon. This knowledge might possibly inform practice. Applied research, whether evaluation or action focussed, is undertaken to improve the quality of practice of a particular discipline (Merriam, 2009, p. 3). I was initially motivated to conduct this study because of my intellectual interest in the IRSJ as a driver of transformation at the UFS. I wanted to extend my knowledge and it would be complementary if this could inform practice. Policy makers or UFS students and/or staff members might be interested in the effectiveness of the IRSJ's role in the transformation process of the UFS. I chose Merriam's basic qualitative research model for this study, because I wanted to extend the knowledge on the phenomenon in general rather than to improve the quality of practise (Merriam, 2009, pp. 3–4).

The philosophical foundation of this research is interpretive, which can also be defined as social constructive. I believe that the nature of reality, also called ontology, is socially constructed. Therefore, I believe that the epistemology or nature of knowledge is not straightforward and that there is no single, observable reality. Everyone experiences the IRSJ and its role in the transformation process of the UFS differently. As a researcher, I construct the knowledge I gather (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). The terms interpretivism and social constructivism are often used interchangeably because individuals develop the subjective meaning of their experiences while they seek to understand the world. These are varied and multiple as well as often negotiated socially (hence social constructivism) (Merriam, 2009, p. 9). The nature of this basic

qualitative research study lies in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). As a researcher, I was interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences related to transformation as driven by the IRSJ at UFS and their experience with the activities of the IRSJ.

The literature review, which can be found in Chapter 2 and 3, helped me to relate previous research and theory to my research problem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 85). The conceptual framework of this study, Boxenbaum's legitimation theory, helped to opt for a basic qualitative research design. By using this theory, I want to determine how the IRSJ contributes to legitimising the idea of transformation at UFS by increasing people's comprehension of transformation. This research design will help to extend the knowledge about transformation in higher education and at the UFS.

4.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State.

In order to reach the aim, the following three objectives were pursued:

1. To analyse, informed by legitimation, whether the key documents and events developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal anything about the Institute's role in the transformation of the University of the Free State.
2. To conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews to determine key informants' perceptions about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State.
3. To conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews to determine key informants' recommendations regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State.

4.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question is:

What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State?

Three research sub-questions stem from the main research question above:

Research sub-question 1:

*What do analysis, informed by legitimization, of **key documents and events** developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal about its role in transformation at the University of the Free State?*

Research sub-question 2:

*What are the perceptions of **key informants** about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State?*

Research sub-question 3:

*Which recommendations are made by **key informants** regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice in transformation at the University of the Free State?*

A discussion of the qualitative processes follows.

4.5 QUALITATIVE DATA GATHERING

The design of this qualitative study is descriptive exploratory. My goal was to examine a new or little-understood phenomenon, which is the transformation process at the UFS and the contribution to this process by the IRSJ. Secondly, I wanted to discover themes of participants' insider perceptions about the contribution of the IRSJ to transformation at UFS. Lastly, I wanted to find out about the recommendations made by participants regarding the contribution of the IRSJ to transformation at UFS.

According to Merriam (2009, p. 14), qualitative research has four key characteristics. Firstly, the focus is on process, understanding and meaning. It was my overall purpose to understand how people experience transformation at UFS and the activities organised by the IRSJ, to have an idea of how they make meaning out of the activities organised by the IRSJ in the context of transformation and to eventually describe how people interpret what they experience. Secondly, the researcher is the primary instrument. This form of direct data collection has a lot of benefits (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 346). In this study, I was the observer in the setting that was being studied, the IRSJ. I was both the interviewer and the person who studied the documents. This is the best way to be “close” to the data in order to fully understand. The third characteristic of qualitative data is inductive data analysis. Qualitative researchers first gather data, then synthesise it to eventually generalise this data into findings. The emphasis is on inductive reasoning (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 347). Fourthly, qualitative research is rich in narrative descriptions because every detail might contribute to a better understanding of behaviour (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 346).

4.5.1 Official documents

To answer the first sub-research question *What do analysis, informed by legitimisation, of key documents and events developed by the IRSJ reveal about its role in transformation at the UFS?*, analysis of official documents was the kind of data collection.

The specific official documents which I used for this study, were documents used for external communication, such as newsletters, policy documents and reports. These reflect the official perspective of the UFS and the IRSJ on topics such as the transformation process of the UFS and also report on the events organised by the IRSJ.

I started the analysis process by analysing the official documents used for external communication first in the context of answering the first sub-question.

The analysis of these artefacts enabled me to understand which initiatives are taken by the IRSJ to contribute to legitimising the idea of transformation at the UFS and therefore answer the first sub-question *What do analysis, informed by legitimisation, of key documents and events developed by the IRSJ reveal about its role in transformation at the UFS?*. I elicited the meanings of the documents by using six relevant questions posed to each document:

1. What are the views expressed in the document on the transformation processes of the University of the Free State?
2. What does the document reveal about the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS?
3. Which kinds of assessment or evaluative claims are made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or about the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?
4. Which kinds of empirical evidence are presented regarding the assessment or evaluative claims made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or about the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?
5. Which recommendations are made in the document that can suggest how the IRSJ can take its role forward in the transformation processes of the UFS?
6. Are there any other relevant observations made in the document about the IRSJ?

The analysis of these official documents gave me further insight and assisted me in contextualising the data collected during the interviews.

4.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data on key informants' views about the contribution of the IRSJ to the transformation process at UFS. These interviews were conducted in the time span of November 2014 and February 2015. A total of 16 key informants were interviewed of which 12 were staff members of the IRSJ and/or UFS, two UFS students who are

aware of the IRSJ's activities, the director of the IRSJ and the interim director. These informants are very close to the epicentre of the process of transformation and as such the aim of the interviews is to explore insider perspectives on the IRSJ.

The interview consisted of seven questions for each key informant (appendix D). Certain probing questions were also asked during the in-depth interviews for the purpose of clarity. The semi-structured questions are attached as an appendix.

4.5.2.1 Rationale behind interview questions

The theoretical framework underpinning this study is Boxenbaum's legitimation theory which defines legitimacy as "the congruence between the values that inform organizational activities and the widely accepted norms in the social system" (Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 237). Through increasing the comprehensibility of an idea, the cognitive legitimacy or the moulding of an organisation that is considered appropriate by its surrounding of an institution can be facilitated. Each question relates to a dimension of the process of legitimation. Every dimension captures an important element in the process of gaining legitimacy.

The first dimension is individual preference. The first four questions mainly focussed on individual preference. I wanted to find out if the transformation process of the UFS and the activities of the IRSJ provoke a personal response that is either positive or negative. When an individual responds positively, it means the individual is attracted to the message the IRSJ sends out in the world and thus feels affinity with its work. He or she will be positively mobilised to act in accordance with the beliefs and values related to the IRSJ (Boxenbaum, 2008, p. 247). The individuals who respond positively to the IRSJ's work are basically the ones who actively participate in legitimising the transformation process and possibly the activities of the IRSJ. Therefore, it is important to know what attracts each legitimising actor.

Questions 5-7 focussed on the second dimension, which is strategic reframing. The questions tried to determine how, through its activities, the IRSJ is contributing to transformation by framing and reframing the official progressive vision of the UFS.

Each question is relevant to an extent for the third dimension, which is local grounding. All questions give an idea of how anchored transformation is in everyday practice at UFS.

4.5.2.2 Selection of participants

The participants of this study were not chosen randomly but purposefully. I chose to do in-depth interviews with key informants, because I believed this would result in the most relevant data for this study. I eventually selected 16 key informants. They were knowledgeable about the topic at hand because of their awareness of the IRSJ. I chose 12 staff members of the IRSJ and/or UFS, of which most were student and research assistants, 2 UFS students who were at least aware of the IRSJ's activities, the director of the IRSJ and the interim director.

4.5.2.3 Data management

The interviews were recorded and transcribed from an audio recording. Transcripts for these data collection activities range from 2 to 7 pages per individual. These transcripts provide text as data type (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012, p. 3), which is suitable to be used for thematic analysis. These texts represent the perceptions, feelings, knowledge and behaviour of the interviewed key informants.

4.5.2.4 Data analysis: Thematic Analysis

For the thematic analysis of the in-depth interviews, I chose the crystallisation style by McMillan and Schumacher (2014, p. 396). Analytic styles tend to greatly vary from researcher to researcher, but ultimately, they all are sorts of inductive data analysis. Concretely, this means moving from specific data to general categories and patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 395). Immersion or the crystallization style is a subjective analytical style, which

seeks to open the analyst to maximum experiences within the analytic style. This style involves reliving each field experience and relentlessly questioning the data for subtle nuances of meaning. Patterns are identified by iterative reflection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 396).

Crystallisation or in-depth immersion in data enabled me to formulate answers to the sub-questions. The second sub-question *What are the perceptions of key informants about the contribution of the IRSJ to transformation at the UFS?* and third sub-question *Which recommendation are made by participants regarding the contribution of the IRSJ in transformation at UFS?* were answered by analysing the in-depth interviews.

In the analysis I followed six steps: collect data, data preparation, code data, describe data, categorise data and develop patterns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 397).

4.5.2.4.1 Phase 1 and 2: Data collection and preparation

I conducted sixteen semi-structured interviews with key informants. This equipped me with an initial familiarisation with the data, but also prior knowledge of the data. I also transcribed all this data myself based on the original recordings of the interview. These transcripts are near verbatim; they retain the necessary information that is true to its original nature. All transcripts were read and re-read at least twice. This effort contributed greatly to my understanding of the data.

4.5.2.4.2 Phase 3 and 4: Data coding and description

After familiarising myself with the data during phase 1 and 2, I started to get a sense of what could be relevant information. I then proceeded by coding each piece of data that seemed significant. This piece of data can be called a data segment (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 398). I labelled each segment with a code. These segments were inserted into a table in MSWord and coded and grouped according to the table headings. Some segments fitted

under more than one code. Table 4.1. provides an example of my refined coding scheme.

Table 4.1. Example of refined coding scheme

Participants	Q1: Views on transformation processes at UFS
1, 8, 11, 14, 16	Complicated; ups and downs; multi-layered; multi-dimensional; complex
1, 8, 11	Can't be forced
1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13	Patience is necessary; slow process; not enough concrete progress; a lot of talking is done, but little action is taken
1	Students have a good mindset
1, 3, 5, 8	Staff members are reluctant to change; lack of personal transformation of staff members; staff treats students inappropriately
1, 5, 8	More cooperation between students and staff members is necessary
3, 4, 8, 14	Process is going well, compared to the past; University makes efforts to accommodate everyone; IRSJ opens at QwaQwa campus; F1 programme was established; UFS takes transformation serious
3, 5, 7	Curriculum has transformed significantly; 'legal pluralism'; academic transformation efforts
3	The middle management (deans and heads of departments, who form the senate) haven't been transformed at all
3, 5	Not enough black lecturers
15, 3	There is still a lot of transformation to be done within student affairs, of which residences are an example. The institutional culture of residences needs to change. Mixed residences? Abandon uniforms? Also, new traditions should replace Rag and Intervarsity. The culture of the UFS is white.
6, 3, 2	Not enough attention is paid to off-campus students
3	Residences such as Heimat are allowed to participate in the activities of the UFS while they are publicly against the

	transformation process.
3	Real transformation is necessary.
3	Too many university regulations; students are not able to voice their opinion.
3, 5	Language policy prevents transformation; it separates students in classrooms.
3	Transformation at QwaQwa is too much ignored; there are no white students at QQ.
2	A lot of transformational efforts have been done within residences, such as the cultural renewal programme.
4	Transformation is an individual process.
4	Students shouldn't work against the "university"
4	Too many students are forced to be at university and are therefore reluctant to transform
5, 13, 14	I don't see the transformation we should have right now compared to universities in the larger South African cities.
6	UFS101 doesn't contribute to the transformation process
13, 16	There is no structure that sets a clear direction; not enough consistency
14	UFS is a reflection of what goes on in its environment
15	Black and white students live too separated; there is very little genuine interaction between black and white students
15	Transformation is an evolution of culture; from an exclusive culture to one where everyone feels at home
16	We need to start by examining the nature of universities and their role in society; their role is not just to do research and teaching; what do we teach and how?; we should challenge universities to play a wider role in society
16	Transformation should not focus on numbers at the exclusion of the other aspects. A focus on several aspects simultaneously is necessary.

All of the sixteen interviews were manually coded this way on the same table. The table was a tool to later be able to group the data into categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 402).

4.5.2.4.3 Phase 5: Data categorisation

Categories (or themes) are entities existing of grouped codes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 404). In phase 5, codes were re-focussed into broader categories.

4.5.2.4.4 Phase 6: Develop patterns

The patterns from the thematic analysis are provided in Chapter 5.

4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

I tried to be as trustworthy as best as possible by being aware of my assumptions, predispositions and influence on the social situation, especially because of my background as a research assistant at the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 407). I did my best to continually, during every step of the research process, have a reflexive attitude by being aware of the context and of my assumptions. In order to foster reflexivity, I often had dialogues with an external investigator, a senior lecturer at the UFS Sociology department, who held me accountable for my hidden beliefs, values, perceptions and assumptions. An example of an assumption I could possibly make, is the overestimation of the IRSJ's positive contribution to transformation as a consequence of the educational events it organises. I also developed a reflexive journal in which I recorded decisions and the reasons for making them.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned in Chapter 1, part of ensuring trustworthiness is carrying out the study as ethically as possible. The object of this research is the IRSJ, therefore permission was requested and received from the Director of the IRSJ in a formal meeting. Ethics clearance (Appendix A) was obtained from the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Board before any empirical research

commenced. In line with the ethics requirements when doing research with people, I obtained informed consent from all participants (Appendix B).

4.8 CONCLUSION

In this study a qualitative research approach was followed and entailed official document analysis and in-depth interviews. Chapter 5 reports the findings, which resulted out of the respective analyses.

5 REPORT OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the findings obtained from the qualitative data analysis will be presented. A discussion of the findings will follow in Chapter 6.

As a summary, the links between the objectives, research questions and methods are given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Objectives, research questions and methods

Objectives	Research Questions	Method
Main research question: <i>What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State?</i>		
To analyse, informed by legitimisation, whether the key documents and events developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal anything about the Institute's role in the transformation of the University of the Free State.	What do analysis, informed by legitimisation, of key documents and events developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal about its role in transformation at the University of the Free State?	Qualitative; Document analysis
To conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews to determine key informants' perceptions about the contribution of the Institute for	What are the perceptions of key informants about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to	Qualitative; Thematic Analysis of interview data

Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State.	transformation at the University of the Free State?	
To conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews to determine key informants' recommendations regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State.	Which recommendations are made by key informants regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice in transformation at the University of the Free State?	Qualitative; Thematic Analysis of interview data

In this chapter, I will commence with presenting the document analysis findings, followed by the findings of the semi-structured interview results.

5.2 FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The materials selected for the analysis were: The Report of the IRSJ 2009-2011, the Report of the IRSJ 2012, the UFS strategic plan 2015-2020 and Botho 3: Newsletter of the IRSJ. This document analysis aims to find answers to the first research sub-question: *What do analysis, informed by legitimization, of **key documents and events** developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal about its role in transformation at the University of the Free State?*

The questions used to interpret the meaning of the official documents were:

1. What are the views expressed in the document on the transformation processes of the University of the Free State?
2. What does the document reveal about the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS?
3. Which kinds of assessment or evaluative claims are made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?
4. Which kinds of empirical evidence are presented regarding the assessment or evaluative claims made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?
5. Which recommendations are made in the document that can suggest how the IRSJ can take its role forward in the transformation processes of the UFS?
6. Are there any other relevant observations made in the document about the IRSJ?

5.2.1 The Report of the International Institute for Studies in race, reconciliation and social justice 2009-2011

Prof Jansen mentions in the foreword of the report how the Reitz event was the precursor to change both the academic and human project of the UFS. The IRSJ was developed as one of UFS' central initiatives, which focuses on the 'Human Project' (UFS, 2012a). This intention answers the first question that helps to interpret the meaning of this document: *What are the views expressed in the document on the transformation processes of the University of the Free State?* This document describes the transformation processes at the UFS as only slightly legitimate, meaning that the Reitz incident is considered as an indicator that more profound transformation efforts need to be done. Therefore, it is clear that the intention of establishing the IRSJ was to contribute to transformation at UFS. The IRSJ is a strategic unit used within the Human Project which has as goal transforming the UFS from a location of racial tension and prejudice to a place that is an example for society through a process of understanding and reconciliation (UFS, 2012a, p. 3). We can thus

interpret this goal setting as the answer to the second question: *What does the document reveal about the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS?* John Samuel, who was the interim director of the IRSJ at its inauguration in 2011, also confirmed that the IRSJ is an intellectual space dedicated to understanding the challenges of reconciliation and social justice (UFS, 2012a, p. 7). This is necessary since understanding these concepts profoundly, is necessary to be able to achieve transformation within UFS. Informed by legitimation, understanding is an important factor in the transformation process. When people better understand the concepts of reconciliation and social justice, they will be more likely to see value in living according to those principles. They will also deem the transformation process as important because they will perceive a transformed UFS as a more appropriate or legitimate institution. Prof Keet, the director of the IRSJ, says in the report that the institute's main activities were related to researching 'race', reconciliation and social justice and institutional transformation (UFS, 2012a, p. 9). Also this contributes to better understanding the concepts of reconciliation, social justice, race and transformation, which ultimately lead to a collective willingness to be part of a transformed UFS. One of the aims of the IRSJ is to serve the national and international Higher Education environments through a proactive approach. This means, closely and strategically linking academic research with practical application. Thus, the IRSJ wants to contribute to the transformation process in HE by sharing their research and their experiences at the UFS. Another aim is to serve the institutional needs of the UFS by becoming a forum for the research linked to social, institutional and curricular change within the university environment (UFS, 2012a, p. 13).

Furthermore, the document describes in more depth the aim of the IRSJ's activities. One of the first projects set up by the IRSJ was a series of conversations, which had as theme: "imagining a reconciled diversity" (UFS, 2012a, p. 15). These conversations aimed to, firstly, understand which spaces on campus caused separation between students and which spaces had the power to bring students together. Secondly, these conversations tried to understand both divergence and convergence within the broader society. This

meant that they aimed to understand which circumstances bring people together and which circumstances continued to separate people. The broad aim of the conversations was to offer young people a space to express their vision for South Africa.

In an attempt to create awareness about a variety of topics, the IRSJ invites university faculty members and students to take part in critical conversations. Other activities include Dialogue with a Visitor, Talking movies, Courtyard Conversations, etc (UFS, 2012a, pp. 15–16).

Despite an in-depth description of the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS, this report does not make any evaluative claims nor gives empirical evidence regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS. It also does not make any recommendations (UFS, 2012a) and thus does not offer answers to questions three, four, five and six.

5.2.2 The Report of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice 2012

Aside from producing research output, the IRSJ also aims to build a vibrant intellectual culture through its activities (UFS, 2013, p. 5). This culture generally contributes to a better understanding of human rights and higher education transformation within the university community. This in turn benefits the transformation process because a better understanding leads to an increased support.

The document answers the second question: *What does the document reveal about the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS?* The purpose of the critical conversations is to engage local and international scholars from all disciplines in public dialogue about reconciliation and social justice related matters. These conversations established the IRSJ as one of the leading centres for intellectual discussion on the Bloemfontein campus (UFS, 2013, p. 11). The IRSJ claims that these conversations were vibrant and very well-received,

which answers the third question: *Which kinds of assessment or evaluative claims are made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?* All this support and enthusiasm is great in gathering support for the transformation agenda, because a better understanding contributes to a more transformed institution. The document furthermore reports on the purpose of its activities in relation to the transformation processes. The IRSJ hosted Courtyard Conversations which were informal yet very popular. The IRSJ also organised other events such as conversations about books as well as co-hosted events. Also these events indirectly gathered support for the transformation process of the UFS. During March 2012, the IRSJ took a stand against hate crimes and human rights violations related to sexual orientation, by holding an LGBTIQ week. During this week, they screened the film “if these walls could talk II” and held a panel discussion. The Winter School on Pluralism and Development brought together an international group of participants from civil society based organisations, activists and graduate students. The Arts and Social Justice Week has as purpose exploring new and different ways of understanding social relations (UFS, 2013, pp. 12–15). The purpose of all these events is creating awareness about social justice related matters. This kind of awareness contributes to better comprehensibility and critical thinking and thus to the legitimization of new ideas such as transformation and other related matters. There is however no empirical evidence presented to back up these assessments. The 2012 report also does not make any recommendations.

5.2.3 University of the Free State strategic plan 2015-2020

The strategic plan of the UFS has as one of its goals the mapping out of the pursuit of transformation, social justice and reconciliation. The IRSJ coordinates and documents these transformation initiatives (UFS, 2017c).

The views expressed in the document on the transformation processes of the UFS are as follows. The UFS has strong values. One of these values is “Human embrace”. This refers to UFS’ reputation of “being a place where campus struggles are engaged and behaviour transformed through human embrace” (UFS, 2015, p. 1). The document goes on to put strong emphasis on the importance of engaging with difference. The document also reflects on

other values such as institutional distinctiveness, emergent leadership and public service (UFS, 2015, p. 1). Via institutional distinctiveness, the UFS presents itself as different compared to other institutions in a new and creative way. The institution also aims to create future leaders through programmes outside of the formal curriculum. At the UFS, public service is considered a mark of excellence. All these values are key to achieve progress in transformation. Through these values, UFS was able to move from being “a politically exclusive project” to an open democratic institution (UFS, 2015, p. 2). Generally, deepening institutional transformation is regarded as a strategic success factor at UFS.

The strategic plan only answers the first question posed to help interpret the meaning of this document, because it focuses on the university as a whole rather than on the IRSJ. However, since the IRSJ is part of the UFS and set up with an intention to contribute to transformation the views on transformation represented in this document are very relevant.

5.2.4 Botho 3: Newsletter of the IRSJ

The Botho newsletter reflects in a detailed way on the events organised by the IRSJ (IRJSJ, 2013). The first question used to interpret the meaning of the official documents *What are the views directly expressed in the document on the transformation processes of the UFS?* is not answered in this document. The document however discusses in a detailed way, the purpose of the activities, which forms the answer to the second question *What does the document reveal about the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS?* as well as, for some activities, to the third question *Which kinds of assessment or evaluative claims are made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?*

The third issue of Botho reflects on the launch of the Human Rights Desk. This desk was established with an aim to contribute to developing a culture of human rights at UFS. This contributes to strengthening the human project of the UFS, which is a strategic part of the transformation process. In this

newsletter, no evaluative claims or assessments are made in regards to the Human Rights Desk.

It also reflects on the Youth Forum encounters hosted by the IRSJ. The forum intends to initiate dialogue between students, student leaders and staff members. The topics covered at the dialogues can be anything related to UFS' academic and human projects that concern them. Per answer to question 3 *Which kinds of assessment or evaluative claims are made regarding the activities organised by the IRSJ or the IRSJ itself, in relation to the transformation processes of the UFS?* used to interpret the meaning of this official document, the IRSJ claims that "sharing ideas and formulating them in the broader contexts of society and humanity assists the group in coming to terms with more general stimuli for transformation" (IRSJ, 2013, p. 4).

Furthermore, the newsletter reports on conferences and colloquia hosted by the IRSJ. This reflection does not reveal much about the purpose of these activities in relation to the transformation processes. During the seminar themed "Pedagogies of contested knowledges", Prof Michalinos Zembylas addressed attendees about "contested knowledges in post traumatic context in which critical pedagogy should pay attention to emotion" (IRSJ, 2013, p. 5). He focused on how racism, oppression, social injustice and the position of privilege can be dismantled in higher education. During this seminar, critical pedagogy was reflected on as a transformative pedagogical praxis with the potential of challenging hegemony. Thus, as an answer to question 2 *What does the document reveal about the purpose of the activities organised by the IRSJ in relation to the transformation processes of UFS?*, we can mention that this activity explores pedagogies which have the potential to facilitate transformation at UFS (IRSJ, 2013, p. 5).

The critical conversations form a recurring activity at the IRSJ. Their purpose is "to interrogate social and political issues by means of intellectual rigour, allowing for the emergence of new theoretical and practical approaches" (IRSJ, 2013, p. 6) which answers the second question.

5.2.5 Overview of themes that demonstrate the practical role of the IRSJ

The findings from the document analysis indicate that the IRSJ focuses first and foremost on the facilitation of an awareness of the need for transformation. Secondly, the IRSJ facilitates an understanding of the rationale for transformation. The IRSJ also develops a culture of transformation through conversations on various levels that guided the imagined transformation space. Concurrently, the IRSJ facilitates engagement with difference and the internalization of the values of the human project.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with 16 participants provided the answer to sub-research question two and three, which are *What are the perceptions of key informants about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State?* and *Which recommendations are made by key informants regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice in transformation at the University of the Free State?*.

Table 5.2. below indicated the link between the questions asked during the semi-structured interviews and the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the thematic analysis. The semi-structured interview questionnaire is attached as appendix D.

Table 5.2. Linking research questions, semi-structured interviews, themes and sub-themes

Questions in in-depth interviews	Theme	Sub-theme
1, 2	Theme 1: Perception of transformation processes at UFS	1.1. Perception of the progress 1.2. Perception of curriculum transformation 1.3. Perception of tools which aspire to facilitate transformation such as UFS 101

		<p>module, F1 programme.</p> <p>1.4. Perception of transformation at QQ campus</p>
1, 2, 3	Theme 2: Perception of personal transformation	<p>2.1. Perception of student and staff members' personal transformation experiences</p> <p>2.2. Perception of connecting with a diversity of people</p> <p>2.3. Personal challenges despite transformation process</p> <p>2.4. Perception of personally contributing to a better South Africa/more socially just environment</p>
3, 4, 5	Theme 3: Perception of IRSJ and its activities	<p>3.1. Perception of pro-blackness rather than non-discrimination</p> <p>3.2. Perception of a smokescreen role that the IRSJ plays</p> <p>3.3. Perception of an alternative and free space, a catalyst for change, a platform to engage with a diversity of people</p>
4, 6	Theme 4: Perception of IRSJ's influence on individuals' lives	<p>4.1. Facilitating personal growth, emotional safety, confidence, problem-solving, critical thinking, mind-opening experiences, inter-academic experiences.</p> <p>4.2. Influencing career choices</p> <p>4.3. Perception of inaccessibility of IRSJ</p>
5	Theme 5: Perception of role played by IRSJ in transformation process at UFS	<p>5.1. Symbol for transformation, hub of the transformation process, the only place which faces transformation challenges</p> <p>5.2. Not doing enough effort</p>

		to contribute to transformation
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5.3.1 Theme 1: Perception of transformation processes at UFS

This theme dealt with how students perceived the transformation processes at the UFS, by focusing on their views on the transformation progress that has been made, their experience with curriculum transformation, their views on the tools which aspire to facilitate transformation as well as how they see the transformation process at the QwaQwa campus.

5.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1.1. Perception of the progress

Participants either believe that the progress of the transformation process is going well, while others believe the progress is too slow. Those who believe it is going too slowly, either believe one should be more patient, while others think there is too much talking done, while not enough action is taken.

Those participants who believe the transformation process is adequately progressing see a positive change between where the university is coming from and what it is striving towards.

Participant 3: “I think the transformation process is going well at this stage, compared to where we were.”

Other participants think things could progress at a faster rate, but believe one needs to be patient.

Participant 1: “It is something we can’t force and have to have patience for. Patience is key to our view of transformation. We shouldn’t expect for the results of transformation to show too quickly. What we are doing now might only show results in 10 years’ time.”

Contrary to the above finding, other participants believe they have been patient enough.

Participant 9: “I don’t think that we are where we are supposed to be and I don’t think we are doing enough in terms of implementation. The process is very slow.”

Generally, participants reported that they believe the transformation processes are being implemented at a rather slow pace. They would prefer for things to move faster.

5.3.1.2 Sub-theme 1.2. Perception of curriculum transformation

Participants are positive about the progress with curriculum transformation which has been made at the UFS.

Participant 3: “I think the most positive results that we have seen, is in terms of the curriculum. This is the one part of the transformation process that I’m very hopeful about. Many departments changed their curriculum in significant ways in order to be more representative of the international trends as well as the South African context.”

Participant 5: “I had one class called ‘legal pluralism’ which is customary law. It is a very interesting class because we are learning about African cultures from a law perspective. It is very good that this has been integrated into our course. It is part of ‘curriculum transformation’.”

5.3.1.3 Sub-theme 1.3. Perception of tools which aspire to facilitate transformation such as UFS 101 module, F1 programme.

Most participants seem to feel mixed emotions around initiatives that aspire to facilitate transformation. The majority feels as if these are forced and do not result in a more transformed institution.

Participant 4: “Prof Jansen also established the F1 program, which takes students overseas. I think it’s a good, even though I don’t feel like it is necessary to do the program in order to be exposed to leadership.”

Participant 6: “I know that UFS 101 was set up as part of the transformation process, but it was really useless. I saw what they were trying to achieve, but they didn’t achieve it. Students just wanted to get it over and done with. It wasn’t engaging. It was interesting in some ways, but it mostly depended on the facilitator. Most of the facilitators didn’t even understand what they were teaching. I felt like they also didn’t allow us to have our own opinions. We had to answer the questions in a certain way.”

Participant 8: “There is progress because of projects like the F1 leadership programme, the UFS101 module and the establishment of the IRSJ. The IRSJ is doing its part by trying to sort out the racial issues, [be]cause racial problems are the main issue that we have to deal with. It is also a frontier that we put up, because we pretend as we are okay, but we are not, because we are never really given a platform to express how we feel. I was part of F1 2011 and remember one of the conversations we had. While we were in Japan, our group was very divided. The black students were on their own and the white students were on their own, even on the train. There was so much tension. When we tried to talk about it afterwards, Rudy Buys shut us down. We were not allowed to talk about it. When we came back we just had to pretend that now we saw our black/white counterparts as equal. I think UFS tries to force transformation by just ignoring. Also, at the conversations held at the IRSJ, there are always a lot of black students attending and trying to talk about issues, but seldom white students. I feel like not everyone is putting in enough effort.”

5.3.1.4 Sub-theme 1.4. Perception of transformation at QwaQwa campus

Participants agree that transformation at the QwaQwa campus is still at a foundation phase and that action needs to be taken. A first step in the right direction is the opening of the IRSJ at the QwaQwa campus.

Participant 4: “The IRSJ was established and now we are launching an IRSJ at the QwaQwa campus, which are really good things. We are really moving forward.”

Participant 3: “Another transformation issue is the QwaQwa campus. No one seems to ask whether this campus is transformed. I think that we need to bring the QwaQwa campus more into the debate on transformation and not just consider them as this add-on campus far far away, because they are not transformed at all. The QwaQwa campus was originally created by the apartheid state in the Bantustans/homelands. Even though there have been huge improvements during the last three years, the history is unfortunately still alive. It would be ideal if there were more white students on campus. The only way in which this will be achieved is when a whole faculty would be moved there, or very specific programs. Currently, white parents don’t send their children there because they consider the campus as a second-class place.”

5.3.2 Theme 2: Perception of personal transformation

This theme dealt with the participants’ personal transformations. How did the participants experience transformation and have they personally changed after they learned about the process of transformation at UFS?

5.3.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1. Perception of students and staff members’ personal transformation experiences

Generally, participants feel that their personal transformation as well as the transformation of those around them was a positive experience. They enjoyed being able to interact with a diversity of people to learn from each other and to better understand one another.

Participant 8: “I think I have used the transformation processes as a positive thing in my life by being at the IRSJ. I was exposed to many different people and I learned to understand how other people think. You become more understanding.”

Participant 10: “I became better in understanding other people. I started learning more about multiculturalism. I learned to transform myself from me being comfortable in my own space, to conversing with diverse people.”

Participant 11: “It has been a positive contribution to my life. It has gotten me thinking and asking questions that I would otherwise have not asked about life, about humanity, about how we are supposed to interact with one another.”

5.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2. Perception of connecting with a diversity of people

The majority of participants believe that the diversity of people they have been able to interact with at the university as a consequence of the transformation process, has been a positive experience. The biggest problem seems to not lie with the interaction between students, but rather with the interaction between students and staff members.

Participant 1: “It was the first time in my life that I lived with someone who was black... I devoted my staff life to human rights, in that sense that I want everyone to be treated equally.”

Participant 3: “There are still too many lecturers around whom are still caught up in the eighties frame of mindset. The way in which they treat students is in some instances highly problematic, because they don't understand the background and the circumstances of first-generation students. They also don't really care about it. Another problem is that many black students come to study here and a black lecturer never teaches them. If there is a 70% black student population, while the senate is 90% white, then obviously, there is need for some serious transformation. Not that it is just a numbers game or a black-white thing, but it is important.”

Participant 7: “Academic transformation really grew me in understanding differences and making me able to interact with different people.”

5.3.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3. Personal challenges despite transformation process

Some participants feel disappointed in the transformation process, because they experienced exclusionary situations as a consequence of being financially disadvantaged or because they do not speak Afrikaans.

Participant 6: “You see invitations, but they are written in Afrikaans and you just don’t feel welcome. Therefore, a change of the language policy could be a great accomplishment as part of the transformation process. The most irritating thing is that most of our lecturers are Afrikaans and are benefitting the Afrikaans-speaking students, because their English is not proficient and are therefore not able to explain properly to non-Afrikaans speaking students. Therefore, so many students don’t want to come to the UFS. When I first came here, I was also shocked about how much Afrikaans is spoken around here.”

Participant 9: “Students who speak Afrikaans have a totally different experience compared to those who don’t... This taught me that this university is still very very conservative. Not providing service to students equally in English is inexcusable to me.”

Participant 15: “I wouldn’t say it was easy being on a campus like this, one where you at times are questioning your existence here and whether you really should be in that classroom and whether you can walk into that person’s office and whether that person will listen to you, because when you stand in front of them, it is as if they don’t recognise your humanity.”

5.3.2.4 Sub-theme 2.4. Perception of personally contributing to a better South Africa/more socially just environment

Many participants feel motivated to be a part of the transformation process at UFS because they believe they contribute to a more socially just university and ultimately to a better South Africa on a daily basis.

Participant 2: “What has influenced my life the most, is that in my everyday life I try to contribute to a better South Africa. I really focus all my energy and actions around how I can live by example. I used to have

difficulties showing empathy for people that resist transformation. In my growth process, I have learned to understand more people and their views.”

Participant 3: “It is also not always about pushing the transformation agenda, but about just creating a more socially just university. In order to achieve this, you have to transform certain things. I’ve never seen my job as transforming the university, which is maybe because I don’t have a picture in mind of how a transformed university looks like. I always focussed on creating a socially just space. In that sense, it is good to be in the belly of the beast.”

5.3.3 Theme 3: Perception of IRSJ and its activities

The focus of theme 3 was the perception participants have about the IRSJ and its activities. How would participants describe the role of the IRSJ and its activities? How did participants experience the activities hosted at the IRSJ?

5.3.3.1 Sub-theme 3.1. Perception of pro-blackness rather than non-discrimination

There was one participant who felt as if the IRSJ is more focused on representing the needs of black students rather than the needs of all students. This participant felt therefore excluded.

Participant 1: “Liberalism within the context of the Institute means being very religiously open-minded and being rather anti-Afrikaner. Also, the Afrikaner cannot be seen as a victim. This was repeatedly mentioned at the Silence after Violence Conference. In other aspects, the Institute is a great place, but this is the Institute for Reconciliation, it shouldn’t be the Institute for black rights. I’m the first person to stand up for black rights, but non-discrimination means that the rights of the Afrikaner are just as important.”

5.3.3.2 Sub-theme 3.2. Perception of the smokescreen role that the IRSJ plays

Some of the participants feel that the IRSJ’s efforts are inadequate. They believe that the IRSJ should address a wider public, take more action and have more influence on the UFS’ day-to-day activities rather than to focus on

academics. They believe the IRSJ pretends to make an effort to contribute to transformation, but does not make any real contributions in reality.

Participant 13: “Right now it almost seems as if, whether correctly so or incorrectly so, the role of the institute from a bigger perspective is a smokescreen role because of an unwillingness. It always has to come as a rescue factor for things that are not going right. Therefore, it's not playing its main role. This is the challenge the institute is sitting with. All its resources are being used for an emergency task that is not serving the main purpose.”

Participant 7: “I don't feel like we have enough influence on what happens on the day-to-day transformation process.”

Participant 15: “The conversations that I have been exposed to has been great. It gets people talking and thinking, like I said before, but at this stage, I feel like it's not enough for me, because all we do is talk. We talk, talk, talk and I wish we would do something. I wish we would act and actually do something about that which we are talking about.”

5.3.3.3 Sub-theme 3.3. Perception of an alternative and free space, a catalyst for change, a platform to engage with a diversity of people

The participants generally feel like the IRSJ is a safe space to talk about difficult questions. It is an engaging environment for them. Participants also experienced the IRSJ as a place where they can be free and creative, where there is no sensor and the setting is informal. Others even described the IRSJ as a catalyst for change.

Participant 7: “The activities have grown my frame of understanding. For example, I would never have read about the transformation people are trying to undertake in other countries, I would never have listened to other people's views, I would just never have been able to interact with a diversity of people, if it wasn't for the activities of the IRSJ.”

Participant 14: “For me, I just find that it just creates a very necessary alternative space. Any activity. Even the social events, conversations, book launches, anything that happens here. The fact that it geographically doesn’t happen in the faculty or lecture rooms, it is a different and free space. To have that, is very important.”

Participant 15: “It provided a safe space for me, to have those difficult conversations and to explore them further and to realise that it is actually okay to ask some of these questions. It is okay to be uncomfortable and to feel the way that I felt. It played a huge role in my development and in my finding a space here and feeling a sense of belonging at the campus.”

5.3.4 Theme 4: Perception of IRSJ’s influence on individuals’ lives

Theme 4 really focuses on the impact the IRSJ has on the participants’ and other individuals’ lives. How are people influenced by the IRSJ and by experiencing its activities? Many people were able to transform their personal life by being able to learn at the IRSJ. They experience personal growth and became more confident amongst other experiences.

5.3.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1. Facilitating personal growth, emotional safety, confidence, problem-solving, critical thinking, mind-opening experiences, inter-academic experiences.

A whole lot of participants have witnessed IRSJ’s positive influence in their own life as well as in other individuals’ life. They experienced that students are able to express their true opinion and are freely able to agree or disagree. They have witnessed mind-opening experiences during particularly the critical conversations. Others enjoyed having academic engagements with people from other academic backgrounds.

Participant 1: “Another great thing about the IRSJ is that you can say what you think, you can either agree or disagree with the statements made. This creates a space where everyone can think about a certain topic with which they might be unfamiliar. The critical conversations broaden the mind.”

Participant 14: “In terms of students, it is great to be in a place where a DVC and a first year can have meaningful conversations about the same topic and not feel that there is a wall of separation between them, because students need to be able to see what is available to them. They can’t do that if they are stuck in a first-year group, with first years all the time only speaking about first-year issues. They need to see beyond themselves. They can’t do that unless you give them an option too. So, for the rank and hierarchy I think it is great, because it breaks down those barriers. For the centralisation of disciplines, it also breaks down those kinds of barriers. It also forces people from different races, cultures and belief systems to sit in a room and hear another point of view and understand that none of us can really be that sure of what we think we know.”

5.3.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2. Influencing career choices

One of the participants witnessed several Law students finding their calling through the Human Rights Desk. Some have witnessed and experienced the discovery of leadership skills, which lead them to become student leaders. Also, other students found an interest in Arts and Social Justice through the Arts and Social Justice Week.

Participant 1: “I’ve seen a lot of positive consequences of the activities organised by the IRSJ. Specifically, the initiatives I have worked on with the HRD, such as the Street Law projects, have had an immense influence on students’ life. Many law students found their calling through these experiences.”

Participant 6: “The activities also created some leaders. Some of the current SRC members, used to attend the activities of the IRSJ. I think that the activities made them realise that they can actually make a difference. It helped them grow and become influential people.”

Participant 9: “I can particularly speak about the Arts and Social Justice Week. The people that were really involved in this week always learned so much from the events.”

5.3.4.3 Sub-theme 4.3. Perception of inaccessibility of IRSJ

Some of the students feel intimidated by the IRSJ, they know of its existence, but do not know how to gain access. Many participants also suggested that the IRSJ should be more tangibly visible and should make its presence more known.

Participant 15: “When one isn’t involved at the Institute, one tends to think that it’s some exclusive thing that only a selected few can enjoy and take part in. So, not a lot of students are involved, because they don’t know that it is accessible and maybe if they do have an idea that it is accessible, they don’t know how to gain access.”

Participant 2: “I believe that the IRSJ should make its presence more known as well as involving students more in its daily activities. In order to achieve this, staff members should go out and approach students on campus. I feel like the IRSJ is such a tremendous institute, which can have a lot of power and influence on the students.”

Participant 10: “Many people don’t know about the IRSJ. There is so much that a person can gain from the IRSJ, there is so much to learn, so it’s too bad that so few people know about it.”

5.3.5 Theme 5: Perception of role played by IRSJ in transformation process at UFS

Theme 5 eventually deals with the perception participants have of the IRSJ and the role it plays in the transformation process at UFS.

5.3.5.1 Sub-theme 5.1. Symbol for transformation, hub of the transformation process, the only place which faces transformation challenges

Many participants strongly believe that the IRSJ is the driving force behind transformation at the UFS. The IRSJ helps the university community understand why transformation or, in other words, change is so important.

Participant 4: “I think the IRSJ is the hub of the transformation process of the university. In my understanding, the IRSJ is the only place that actually confronts issues of transformation.”

Participant 11: “The IRSJ definitely plays a role. The institute at least started the process and there is so much more that needs to be done. No one has a clear-cut answer as to where to start the process. The IRSJ at least started to ask the questions on how to do this.”

Participant 16: “I’ve argued again before that transformation in any society is an extremely complex. It is a multifaceted process. And therefore, we need to sharpen, we need to enhance, our intellectual understanding. Because it demands so much from us. One of the roles that the institute can perform, is helping the university community understand better what this is. What is transformation? What does it mean? How does it impact on us? I think that is in part the reason why people resist change. It is not because they are necessarily against it, but they are afraid. They are uncertain. And in a university like this one, where the whites for over 1900 have enjoyed the privileged life. Then they suffered that loss. Therefore, they form a deep suspicion of anything that resembles change. Then of course, on the side of black students this is new. So, there is a desperate need for us to begin to sharpen and deepen our intellectual understanding of transformation in Higher Education. Intellectual and emotional understanding.”

5.3.5.2 Sub-theme 5.2. Not doing enough effort to contribute to transformation

Many participants feel as if the IRSJ is doing a great effort to contribute to transformation at the UFS, however, they believe more could be done. Someone mentioned that the IRSJ should strive for greater independence so that it is able to help more people. Others believe the IRSJ’s influence could

be much greater, if they made more effort to address a wider public. Several participants also mention that the IRSJ should do more hands-on transformational work as opposed to research.

Participant 3: “But what has happened is that the IRSJ became part of the office of the rector. It has become especially closely linked to the office of the rector since Prof Keet is sitting on the rectorate. I don’t think that is a good thing. I like the idea of not being part of a faculty, but I think we shouldn’t be that closely linked to the office of the rector. In an ideal world, I think we should be linked to the office of the vice-rector/external relations. Just to get a bit of distance.”

Participant 1: “Right now, the IRSJ is going on a very research mode, which makes us very much like any other Institute. I believe that research is important, but I don’t believe research should be done by the Institute now. I think now, the IRSJ should rather focus on the activities, because there is more need for broadening of the mind.”

Participant 6: “I feel like prof and JC are academically tackling a lot of topics that contribute to the transformation process. Unfortunately, in my opinion, it stops there. People that are not closely involved in these processes or who read their articles don’t know what goes on. This way they only influence a few people who make the topic of transformation their specific interest. Maybe the activities of the IRSJ should be advertised more, so that more people can become involved.”

Participant 7: “On a very organisational and bureaucratic level, I think the IRSJ plays a big role. For example, having Prof Keet as an adviser to rectorate and having JC as a commentator/adviser to rectorate. In a very formalised structure, the IRSJ has a lot of influence, but they don’t play a large enough practical day-to-day engagement and interactive role. I feel like the idea of the IRSJ is becoming too much of a department instead of a practical transformation orientated space. The IRSJ has influence through its staff members who for example become part of the SRC and that way apply

what they have been thought by the IRSJ. Unfortunately, I don't feel like we have enough influence on what happens on the day-to-day transformation process.”

5.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter findings from the thematic analysis of documents and in-depth interviews were presented. In conclusion, I can reflect that the majority of participants believed that the IRSJ contributes in several constructive ways to the transformation process at the UFS. The transformation imperatives that arose relate to the university's vision for transformation. Participants strongly believe that the role of the University goes beyond academic teaching and learning. We have to challenge universities to play a much wider role in society. The IRSJ helps us understand what social transformation entails and why it is so important by strengthening the intellectual debate. This is important because people generally fear or are reluctant to change.

Discussions of the findings follow in Chapter 6.

6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss the findings from the document analysis and the semi-structured interviews. These findings are all leading to answering the main research question:

What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State?

To answer this main question, I first provide a discussion of the findings that relate to the three research sub-questions.

6.2 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION 1

*What do analysis, informed by legitimization, of **key documents and events** developed by the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice reveal about its role in transformation at the University of the Free State?*

The document analysis indicated that the IRSJ was established with the intention to contribute to the transformation process at UFS. The IRSJ is a strategic unit within the Human Project which has as goal transforming the UFS from a location of racial tension to a place that is an example for society through a process of understanding and reconciliation. In section 3.6.1., I have discussed the 'legitimation crisis' UFS has been facing since its first attempts at transformative action. The kind of legitimacy lacking at UFS is cognitive legitimacy. This occurs when an organisation is framed as desirable, proper and appropriate within a widely accepted system of norms. The successful implementation of the transformation initiatives would result in higher cognitive legitimacy. Boxenbaum (2008) suggests three elements that are involved in successfully implementing novel ideas in order to strengthen legitimacy. These include personal preference, strategic reframing and local grounding. Strategic reframing is the strategy used by the IRSJ. Its activities aim to gather support for UFS' transformation processes. If we look at the

critical conversations specifically, we can consider those to be a strategic reframing strategy (see section 3.6.2.). It allows us to go beyond strict academic teaching and learning and challenge universities to play a much wider role in society.

6.3 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION 2

*What are the perceptions of **key informants** about the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State?*

Before exploring the participants' perceptions of how the IRSJ contributes to transformation at UFS, I asked about their perception of the transformation processes at UFS. I categorised these perceptions under theme 1. I ended up with four sub-themes, being the perception of the progress of the transformation process, perception of curriculum transformation, the perception of tools that aspire to facilitate transformation and perception of transformation at the QwaQwa campus. Generally, participants seem to be very impatient and all clearly agree that the transformation processes are being implemented at a too slow rate. Despite the fact that transformation progress is significant, the implementation rate is slow. Some participants believe that the results of current transformation efforts will only show in the far future meaning that we all need to be more patient. Some seem to agree that UFS has made significant progress in terms of curriculum transformation. These participants reported positively about the transformed curriculum which has become more representative of the international trends as well as the South African context. One participant reported that she enjoys learning about African cultures during law lectures. They also generally disapprove of forced transformation initiatives and did not respond well to the UFS 101 module and the F1 programme. They believe these are counterproductive in the pursuit of transformation. The forced nature of the programmes doesn't allow space for constructive engagement, according to the key informants. A space such as the IRSJ does allow the flexibility to have these necessary conversations. Participants lastly believe more effort should be invested in transformation initiatives at the Qwaqwa campus, because the Qwaqwa campus is currently

perceived as a second-class place by white parents. Luckily, an IRSJ has been launched.

Secondly, I asked about the participants' perceptions of their own transformation and those around them. This equalled theme 2. Sub-themes included the perception of student and staff personal transformation experiences, the perception of connecting with others in positive and negative ways, personal experiences of being disadvantaged financially and language wise despite the transformation process and perception of personally contributing to a better South Africa that is a more socially just society. Most participants revealed that their personal transformation process was a positive process in which they enjoyed interacting with a diversity of people. Sub-theme 2.2. was the perception of connecting with a diversity of people. Participants reported that it allowed them to be more emphatic and humane. It seems like especially lecturers struggled to adapt to teaching a diversity of students, while students did not have a problem with being a part of a diverse community. Students reported that they want everyone to be treated equally and don't appreciate lecturers who are not open to transformation. They also want to see more black lecturers in front of the classroom. Sub-theme 2.3. included personal challenges faced by disadvantaged students despite the transformation efforts. They felt disappointed because they struggled financially or did not receive the service they required because they do not speak Afrikaans. These exclusionary circumstances need to change in order to consider the UFS to be a transformed institution that recognises everyone's humanity. In sub-theme 2.4., participants expressed their excitement to be part of the transformation process because they believe they are contributing to a more socially just society. They believe it is important to focus on the bigger picture.

Eventually, I asked about the perception participants have about the IRSJ and its activities as well as the perception of the IRSJ's influence on individuals' lives. The perception of the IRSJ and its activities is described in theme 3. Participants were rather divided in their perceptions about the IRSJ. One participant believed that the IRSJ represents the needs of black students and

therefore felt excluded. She added that the IRSJ should stand up for non-discrimination, which includes standing up for the rights of Afrikaners. Sub-theme 3.2. covered the smokescreen role that the IRSJ plays. Some of the participants are so passionate about strengthening the legitimacy of the UFS by gathering support for the transformation project that they feel as if the IRSJ's efforts are inadequate. They believe the IRSJ could reach a wider audience and have a bigger impact. Several participants strongly feel that the IRSJ should focus less on academic research and more on the day-to-day activities of the UFS. They wish to see more action. Lastly, sub-theme 3.3. represents the IRSJ as an alternative and free space, a catalyst for change and a platform to engage with a diversity of people. This is a perception that the majority of participants agree on. They really appreciate the informal setting of the IRSJ, which makes them feel safe.

Theme 4 focuses on the impact that the IRSJ has on the participants' and other individuals' lives. The three sub-themes clearly distinct several influences. Firstly, a lot of participants have witnessed the IRSJ's positive influence in their own life as well as in other individuals' lives. The IRSJ has been able to facilitate personal growth, emotional safety, confidence, problem-solving, critical thinking, mind-opening experiences and even academic engagements with people from other academic backgrounds. Participants reported that the IRSJ is a space where everyone is able to express their true opinion and stimulates meaningful conversations. Furthermore, the IRSJ has been able to influence career choices. A participant reported that she and her peers found their calling for Human Rights Law via the Human Rights Desk. Others became influential leaders while some nurtured an interest for Arts. Lastly, some students have failed to gain access to the IRSJ and therefore feel as if the space is intimidating. Many students recommended a more prominent visibility by the IRSJ and thus become a more inviting space.

Finally, theme 5 discusses the role played by the IRSJ in transformation at UFS. This theme is two-fold. On the one hand, participants see the IRSJ as a symbol for transformation, a hub of the transformation process and the only place that faces transformation challenges. While others believe that the IRSJ

does not do enough to contribute to transformation. Theme 5.1. shows that many participants strongly believe that the IRSJ is the driving force behind transformation at UFS. They perceive the IRSJ as a factor which helps the university community understand why transformation or, in other words, change is so very important. Theme 5.2. represents the perception of many participants who think more could be done from the IRSJ's part to push the transformation agenda. They mostly think that the IRSJ should make more effort to address a wider public as well as do more practical transformation work.

6.4 RESEARCH SUB-QUESTION 3

*Which recommendations are made by **participants** regarding the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State?*

Many participants are very passionate about social transformation and are therefore impatient with the process of transformation. They love the work the IRSJ does and the influence it has had on their own lives and that of those around them. They thus would like to see the IRSJ have more practical influence and interact with more students. They recommend the IRSJ to be more vocal and make its presence more known. A good strategy in growing its reach would be by crossing academic disciplinary borders. Otherwise, the IRSJ should just continue doing what it is doing.

6.5 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State?

Taking the main findings of the three research sub-questions into consideration it can be concluded that the IRSJ indeed contributes in several significant ways to the transformation processes at the UFS. The documents reflect the intent of the IRSJ to contribute to transformation in line with the vision of the university. Participants clearly see the value of the activities of the IRSJ in pushing the transformation agenda of the UFS. For many, the

IRSJ has had a valuable effect on their personal transformation process and even inspired some to pursue a career in the social justice environment. Many would hope that the IRSJ could continue its work and hopefully extend its influence more widely.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The IRSJ is a strategic unit in the process of pursuing institutional transformation within the UFS. Facilitating the transformation process at UFS equals a higher cognitive legitimate institution because its organisational activities become more in line with the recommendations of the higher education sector as well as the wider social system. Echoes of Boxenbaum' (2008) elements; individual preference, strategic reframing and local grounding, resonate in the findings. The IRSJ offers a variety of activities from which individuals can choose according to their preferences regarding participation in public events. The origins of the IRSJ as an institutional structure required strategic reframing of how transformation processes are to be driven, i.e. in a combination of centralised (through the office of the Rector) and decentralised (through the IRSJ) modalities. Having the IRSJ housed at a physical distance from the Rector's office provides it a local grounding that the main building housing the Rector may not offer. Transformation represents a novel idea that needs to be introduced within UFS' institutional walls. This is not an easy task, but the IRSJ is doing a progressive and productive job by using strategic reframing strategies such as the critical conversations.

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. Chapter 7 will provide the key findings, limitations of the study as well as recommendations for further study. I will also reflect on the process and present my own position.

7 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate, through a qualitative research approach, the extent to which the IRSJ contributed to the transformation processes at the UFS. Document analyses were done to produce a rich description of the IRSJ intentions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 participants to find out their perceptions of the IRSJ and its role in the personal and institutional transformation processes at the UFS. All these sets of data were analysed and the findings were discussed.

The key findings, recommendations, limitations and personal reflections that originated from the study follow below.

7.2 KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In response to the main research question the following key findings were highlighted:

What is the contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to the transformation process at the University of the Free State?

The IRSJ completes a challenging task of strategically reframing the novel idea of transformation in order to gather more support for this greater goal. They do this by helping people better understand the importance of transformation. This topic is so sensitive and challenging to comprehend that a safe space such as the IRSJ is vital in achieving a transformed institution. Once the UFS will have achieved its transformation goals, with the aid of the IRSJ, it will become a more cognitive legitimate institution that is more accepted by the wider social system.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, from the in-depth interviews we learned that UFS in itself has a long way to go in increasing its cognitive legitimacy. The institution is not transformed yet, because many members of the university community do not

support transformative action. Therefore, the findings of this study on how to increase cognitive legitimacy using the IRSJ as a strategic unit in strengthening the transformation processes may be helpful to inform managerial decisions when strategizing on how to implement transformative action.

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that the IRSJ contributes to the transformation process of the UFS by strengthening our intellectual understanding of transformation through several strategic reframing strategies such as the critical conversations. Many participants are however frustrated and believe the IRSJ should have a wider practical influence. This frustration should be addressed.

Further research should include researching how the IRSJ can be more practically involved in transformation initiatives.

7.4 LIMITATIONS

Despite the high representativity to the population, the findings of this study are limited to 16 key informant participants.

A qualitative research approach was followed for this study, thus using another research design might uncover additional and different factors related to the contribution of the IRSJ to the transformation process at UFS.

Using a different theoretical framework than legitimation theory may yield different outcomes in a similar study.

7.5 CONCLUSION AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

It is hoped that this study has provided an answer to the main research question and has identified several factors that contribute to the transformation process of UFS in the context of the IRSJ.

After being a member of the IRSJ staff team for two years, this study took me on a journey to better understand what this place meant for others. It has

meant so much to my personal development. The IRSJ helped me to better understand South Africa's social transformation as well as the institutional transformation the UFS was going through. The insight into others' experiences with transformation at the UFS and their experiences at the IRSJ was the best way for me to close off an important chapter of my life. These participants left me inspired to continue to make efforts to contribute to social development in South Africa.

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9 LIST OF APPENDICES

9.1 APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



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Ethics Office

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21 November 2014

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION:

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE TO TRANSFORMATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Dear Ms Vanneste

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:

UFS-EDU-2014-062

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for three years from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Barclay
Faculty Ethics Officer

9.2 APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Draft of consent seeking from potential participants

Dear

Consent sought for your participation in research

I hereby seek your consent to participate in research on my M.A. (HES) dissertation topic: *The contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State*. This research is done for the fulfilment of requirements for my M.A. (HES) degree at the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education.

Your participation will be in the form of a semi-structured interview in which you will be required to respond orally to questions I pose to you regarding the topic.

Through this study I hope to contribute to Higher Education in South Africa by producing knowledge on how an institute within a University can contribute to the transformation process in the context of the South African education system. The outcomes of this study will be beneficial for policy makers and the management of the UFS as well as the students.

By granting consent you understand that you can withdraw at any time without any negative effect; your name will not be made public, i.e. that the data obtained from you will be reported anonymously; that the findings from the research will be shared with the academic community.

If you **grant** consent, your signature is required here: .

(Official designation and your full names) _____

(Contact details) _____

If you **do not grant** consent, your signature is required here:

9.3 APPENDIX C: DECLARATION BY LANGUAGE EDITOR

PROOF OF EDITING BY A LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER: Lien Vanneste MA

Lingua Language Practice Services

Marisia Minnaar

lingualps@gmail.com

0828189160

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PROOF OF EDITING BY A LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER: Lien Vanneste MA

This letter serves as proof that the dissertation: **The Contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to Transformation at the University of The Free State** was edited by Marisia Minnaar, a qualified language practitioner.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Minnaar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

9.4 APPENDIX D: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND A SUMMARY OF THE ANSWERS

9.4.1 Semi-structured interview questions

Q1: What are your views on the transformation processes of the University of the Free State?

Q2: How has UFS' transformation processes affected your student/staff life?

Q3: What role have the activities organised by the IRSJ played in your student/staff life?

Q4: What role have the activities organised by the IRSJ played in other student/staff members' life?

Q5: What are your thoughts on the role played by the IRSJ in the transformation processes at the UFS?

Q6: Which recommendations can you suggest for the IRSJ to take into consideration regarding its role in the transformation processes of the UFS?

Q7: You are welcome to add any other comment in relation to the IRSJ's role in the transformation processes of the UFS?

9.4.2 Summary of the answers

Participants	Q1: Views on transformation processes at UFS
1, 8, 11, 14, 16	Complicated; ups and downs; multi-layered; multi-dimensional; complex
1, 8, 11	Can't be forced
1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13	Patience is necessary; slow process; not enough concrete progress; a lot of talking is done, but little action is taken
1	Students have a good mindset
1, 3, 5, 8	Staff members are reluctant to change; lack of personal transformation of staff members; staff treats students inappropriately
1, 5, 8	More cooperation between students and staff members is necessary
3, 4, 8, 14	Process is going well, compared to the past; University makes efforts to accommodate everyone; IRSJ opens at QwaQwa campus; F1 programme was established; UFS takes transformation serious
3, 5, 7	Curriculum has transformed significantly; 'legal pluralism'; academic transformation efforts
3	The middle management (deans and heads of departments, who forms the senate) haven't been transformed at all
3, 5	Not enough black lecturers
15, 3	There is still a lot of transformation to be done within student affairs, of which residences are an example. The institutional culture of residences needs to change. Mixed residences? Abandon uniforms? Also, new traditions should replace Rag and Intervarsity. The culture of the UFS is white.
6, 3, 2	Not enough attention is paid to off-campus students
3	Residences such as Heimat are allowed to participate in the activities of the UFS while they are publicly against the transformation process.
3	Real transformation is necessary.

3	Too many university regulations; students are not able to voice their opinion.
3, 5	Language policy prevents transformation; it separates students in classrooms.
3	Transformation at QwaQwa is too much ignored; there are no white students at QQ.
2	A lot of transformational efforts have been done within residences, such as the cultural renewal programme.
4	Transformation is an individual process.
4	Students shouldn't work against the "university"
4	Too many students are forced to be at university and are therefore reluctant to transform
5, 13, 14	I don't see the transformation we should have right now compared to universities in the larger South African cities.
6	UFS101 doesn't contribute to the transformation process
13, 16	There is no structure that sets a clear direction; not enough consistency
14	UFS is a reflection of what goes on in its environment
15	Black and white students live too separated; there is very little genuine interaction between black and white students
15	Transformation is an evolution of culture; from an exclusive culture to one where everyone feels at home
16	We need to start by examining the nature of universities and their role in society; their role is not just to do research and teaching; what do we teach and how?; we should challenge universities to play a wider role in society
16	Transformation should not focus on numbers at the exclusion of the other aspects. A focus on several aspects simultaneously is necessary.

Participants	Q2: Personally affected by the transformation process at UFS
1, 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15	Very positive experience; was able to connect with diversity of people; be compassionate
1, 11	Was affected to devote my staff life to Human Rights
2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15	Was affected to open eyes for new ideas etc. ; being exposed to new things triggers new thoughts
2, 3, 4, 7	Was affected to contribute to a better South Africa on a daily basis; was affected to create a socially just university for the students; transformed attitude and behaviour
3	Was energised to experience that transformation can work if we all work together
3	Was negatively affected by people who threatened that my transformational efforts were a waste of time; made peace with making a lot of enemies
3	Was motivated to contribute to transformation because of the students
4	Was awkwardly affected because the university aims to create better humans but de-registers students for economic reasons
4	Was not able to enjoy university life because of financial challenges despite the transformation process
4	Was affected to believe that the university can't transform individuals, they have to transform themselves
4	Was affected to believe that transformation is a financial issue; without economic support, transformation is impossible
5, 6	Was not affected by the transformation processes' as an off-campus student
6, 9	Feels excluded because of the language; too often Afrikaans is the used medium of language communication; Afrikaans speaking students are in an advantage situation.
9	Feels that staff members too easily ignore the transformation process
13	Not affected because there is no transformation taking place
14	Was frustrated by the process because the conservative white

	belt at the university perpetrates an image that they don't care about black students. I had to fight against that as a white staff member.
15	Was affected negatively because I wasn't treated equally compared to others despite transformation; this process thought me a lot and I learned to appreciate it

Participants	Q3: Personally affected by the activities organised by the IRSJ
1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 11; 15	Affected in a mind-opening way; affected me to grow personally (Psychologically and intellectually)
1	As Afrikaner I often feel discriminated against at the IRSJ; pro-blackness rules over non-discrimination
2; 3; 5; 7; 15	Affected me to feel safe to talk about difficult topics; engaging
3; 6; 7; 15	Affected to feel free and creative; there is no sensor and the setting is informal
4	Hugely affected positively in many ways such as financially (job), boost in confidence, etc.
6	Affected me to read more
6; 9	Affected me to feel motivated to study further because I believe I can make a difference
7	Affected me to interact with a very wide diversity of people
9	Affected me to adopt to the institute's environment because of my job; I feel that the IRSJ should make an effort to adapt to the students instead
9	Hugely affected during both student and staff life because it made me aware that I can personally contribute to making a difference
9	Affected to personally educate people about certain issues that they are unaware of
10	Affected by the experience that students perceive top management as not very democratic. This has led me to run my current office differently, in a way that includes the student's voice.
10	Affected me to think more critically
11	Affected me to find solutions to certain problems
13	Not affected because the activities of the IRSJ play a smoke screen role in the transformation process. There is an unwillingness to actually transform. All the institute's resources are being used for an emergency task that is not

	serving the main purpose.
14	Affected to believe that it is useful to have a structure on campus that operates outside of the structure of the university. It makes sense because it has become a home for students who don't particularly feel safe/at home on campus. Students feel safe at the IRSJ without being judged.
14	The institute creates a very necessary alternative and free space.
16	Affected to believe that the IRSJ's behaviour should be the normal behaviour of all the faculties; why does it require an institute to set this up?
16	Affected to believe that the IRSJ is a much needed catalyst for change; alliances will be important in taking this forward.

Participants	Q4: People around you affected by the activities organised by the IRSJ
1	Witnessed many Law Students finding their calling through the Human Rights Desk
1; 7; 8	Witnessed students being able to express their true opinion, being freely able to agree or disagree
1; 2; 6; 7; 10; 14; 15	Witnessed people enjoying mind-opening experiences during the critical conversations
3; 6; 7; 10; 15	Witnessed that the activities of the IRSJ contribute to people's personal transformation process
3	Even though personal transformation was witnessed, the IRSJ doesn't have the capacity to transform the whole UFS (yet)
4; 6; 11	Witnessed students attend continuously because they benefit from the activities. Unsure how they benefit exactly.
5	Witnessed friends finding the activities of the IRSJ very interesting.
5	Witnessed a very angry student who was convinced that the IRSJ doesn't achieve anything.
6; 11; 14	Witnessed different kinds of people benefit in different ways. The gay community for example has achieved more open communication on campus.
6	Witnessed attendees become student leaders because they were influenced to believe in themselves and that they can make a difference.
7	Witnessed that people who are uncomfortable with the conservative ideology of the university can be comfortable at the IRSJ. It is a space for progressive minds. I do believe that the IRSJ should make efforts to infiltrate other areas of the university.
9	Witnessed that students learned a lot during the Arts and Social Justice Week.
13	Haven't witnessed any effect that the activities of the IRSJ has on students.

14	Witnessed people from different academic backgrounds enjoy inter-academic engagements.
14	Witnessed that the conversations organised by the IRSJ started a trend on campus. Different departments now organise conversations.
15	Witnessed that students are intimidated. They don't know how to gain access and conceive it as inaccessible.
15	Witnessed that many students didn't know where the IRSJ is. The IRSJ could make an effort to put itself more out there.
16	Witnessed that people feel relatively safe and comfortable in the space of the IRSJ. It is therefore important that a space like that exists in the landscape of the university.
16	Witnessed that it is beneficial to a space like to IRSJ to grow, yet not too much because that defeats the purpose.
16	Witnessed that more people could be influenced by the IRSJ if new spheres and spaces for communication and dialogue existed. An example would be to work together with other faculties on certain projects.

Participants	Q5: Role played by the IRSJ in the transformation processes at UFS.
1	IRJS is a monument/symbol for transformation at UFS.
1	IRJS has anti-Afrikaner tendencies which work counterproductive in facilitating transformation at UFS.
1; 2; 8; 10	IRJS has a great potential to play a big role in the transformation processes at UFS; IRJS could serve more people, because I believe it was built to serve the people and it has resources to do so.
2; 8	IRJS is not known by many students on campus, this is potentially a problem.
3; 11	IRJS has played a successful part in mediating a lot of individuals in the right direction.
3	IRJS should strive for greater independence in order to be able to help more people. It is good that the IRJS is not linked to any faculties, but it should be less closely linked to the office of the Rector. The IRJS should rather advise the Rector's office on transformation issues.
4; 11; 14	IRJS is the only place that actually confronts issues of transformation and deals with people from different demographics and genders; IRJS at least started the process and there is so much more that needs to be done; IRJS is mindful of physically showing diversity and enacting it.
4; 8; 11; 14	IRJS is the hub of the transformation process of the UFS. IRJS is the place where students lay down their human rights complaints.
4; 8; 14	IRJS is the only place within UFS that plays a role in the transformation process that does transformative work.
4	IRJS should have a larger influence in the general running of the UFS, because UFS is generally not doing enough.
1; 6; 7; 8; 15	IRJS should influence more people by speaking to / addressing a wider public; IRJS should talk less and do more (example: there should be services on campus that help

	<p>students to realise their ideas such as starting a business. This way they can take ownership and do something about their problems.); IRSJ should focus on playing a more active transformational role at UFS rather than doing research because there is a need to broaden people's minds; IRSJ should increase its influence on the day-to-day transformation process (example: transformation charter is too academic); IRSJ has anti-Afrikaner tendencies which work counterproductive in facilitating transformation at UFS.</p>
7; 9; 14	<p>IRSJ plays a large role on an organisational and bureaucratic level because Prof Keet and JC advise the rectorate.</p>
9; 13	<p>IRSJ has deviated a bit from its initial purpose therefore it could be more effective than it is right now. The transformation process should be its primary focus.</p>
10	<p>IRSJ is doing something but not intensively enough.</p>
13	<p>IRSJ should reposition itself, it should not be cleaning up the dirt/mess that others have made but rather help survivors.</p>
14	<p>IRSJ should be committed to a process of change, without fear! (example: Afrikaners can be very disrespectful on campus and there is no reason to be scared on not stand up against that) Change is necessary!</p>
16	<p>IRSJ helps to deepen our understanding of transformation by doing research and strengthening the intellectual debate. This is important because people are afraid of change</p>

Participants	Q6: Recommendations for the IRSJ regarding its role in the transformation processes of the UFS
1; 11; 15	IRSJ should have more practical influence; IRSJ should interact more with students; IRSJ should set-up more action plans (what are we doing to increase equality?).
1; 2; 10	IRSJ should be more tangibly visible; IRSJ should make its presence more known; IRSJ should set-up an intense marketing campaign.
3; 13	IRSJ should prepare for the future in order to secure its existence. A different structure would help (example: 3 deputy directors for each “leg” of the institute: transformation – research – human rights). IRSJ should also not be part of the office of the VC and rector; IRSJ should be more independent, they need to be totally autonomous from management.
3	IRSJ should further establish the QwaQwa offices.
4; 7	IRSJ should give student assistants more leverage to run their ideas regarding addressing equality issues on campus; IRSJ should not become an elite environment which is not open to undergraduate students. Building strong relationships with students is very important because they have different insights and connections. IRSJ should empower students to better their own thinking and to start doing research.
4	IRSJ should find a bigger space to be housed in which is not decorated with symbols, but is neutral.
4	IRSJ should focus on transforming people who are underprivileged, people who are at UFS are privileged enough to actually be here therefore we can't focus on transforming them.
5	IRSJ should allow the transformation desk to do more transformational work, because now they are always busy with the daily running of the IRSJ.
6	IRSJ employees should be more motivated to contribute to the common goal. Better communication could help as well as

	making things more fun and memorable.
8	IRSJ should focus on transforming people that don't attend the critical conversations.
9	IRSJ should create a platform for students through which they can listen to the voice of the student and try to act upon certain proposals. The voice of the students' needs to be more heard.
10	IRSJ should link up more with other departments.
11	IRSJ should teach students more about constitutional values. Everyone should treat the other with dignity and respect.
14	IRSJ should not compromise contact between diverse groups of people for research. The biggest social problem in South Africa right now is that people can't identify with one another can't understand one another. This is affecting the UFS. Increased engagement could contribute to solving this problem.
16	IRSJ should continue to do what it's doing but with greater freedom to cross academic disciplinary borders.

APPENDIX E: TURNITIN REPORT

The contribution of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice to transformation at the University of the Free State

ORIGINALITY REPORT

% **10**
SIMILARITY INDEX

% **9**
INTERNET SOURCES

% **5**
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% **3**
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