A PHENOMENOLOGICAL READING OF THE RACIAL KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITIES OF STUDENT LEADERS ENGAGED IN RECONCILIATION

by

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This thesis is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the

PhD in Higher Education Studies

in the

School of Higher Education Studies, Faculty of Education

at the

University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa

Study Code: 7910

Module Code: HOS900

Date of submission: 20 August 2017

Promoter: Prof J.D. Jansen

Co-Promoter: Prof S.M. Niemann

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.

DECLARATION

I, Barend Rudolf Buys, declare that the study I hereby submit for the degree, Philosophiae Doctor in Higher Education Studies in the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted this work, either as a whole or in part, for qualification at another institution of higher education.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Herewith I, **Cornelia Geldenhuys (ID 521114 0083 088)** declare that I am a qualified, accredited language practitioner and I have edited the following PhD thesis in Higher Education studies by

Barend Rudolf Buys (Student number 2009012630)

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL READING OF
THE RACIAL KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITIES OF STUDENT LEADERS
ENGAGED IN RECONCILIATION

All changes were indicated by track changes and comments for the student to verify and finalise.

.....

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply aware of and grateful for the sacrifices so many colleagues, friends and family made to bring this dissertation to fruition.

I want to thank my family, Carin and Brend, for the space and care you offered me so unconditionally to do this work. I am grateful to my parents, Gerhard, Claudette, Ron and Leza, and my brothers and sisters of our extended family for their support during my studies.

I want to honour and thank my promoters, Professors Jonathan Jansen and Rita Niemann for their patience, guidance and wisdom, and your faith in me, as much as in this research. You taught me rigour and the joy of scholarship to change the world.

I am grateful for the critical readership of professors Andre Keet, Melanie Walker and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. I found myself returning to your comments repeatedly as I progressed and matured in reflecting on the lives of our students.

I am indebted to Prof Carlos Torres for hosting me as visiting scholar at the Paulo Freire Institute of the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and for his comments on this study. I am grateful to the graduate community of international students I joined at UCLA that engaged me for the content of my argument. I have become a Freirean for the clarity of purpose and the promise of freedom you introduced me to in his work.

I am grateful to my colleagues at the University of the Free State who enabled my studies locally and abroad. Prof Corli Witthuhn and Dr Glen Taylor made the contractual and financial arrangements possible for me to complete this research abroad. Eve Gray and Cornelia Geldenhuys with grace edited and re-edited my writing. Hesma van Tonder eased me into literature, and Christa Duvenhage patiently assisted me with the technicalities of faculty registration and ethical clearances.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to the student leaders I worked with as we struggled to design, and then attempt to build a new community and inspiring future on campus. To listen to your voices and life stories has been and will always be a privilege.

If ever there was a community of ‘bridgebuilders’, it is the village that raised this child. I am forever in your debt.

ABSTRACT

This study wants to make sense of the lived experiences of student leaders engaged in racial reconciliation at a South African university campus by exploring their struggles with racial knowledge and identity over time. Four students, two male and two female, two black and two white, participated in the study. They were senior student leaders that played a public role in racial reconciliation on campus following a traumatic incident of racial discrimination at Reitz, a men's residence on campus.

The study faced a dearth in current literature on the combined themes of student leadership, racial knowledge and identity, and reconciliation. However, a broad literature review on student engagement, student leadership and student diversity revealed critical themes and gaps relevant to this study in the research on diversity and change in higher education. A framework of concepts was developed to read the narrative data of the study. These included the notions of conscientisation (Freire), racial ignorance (Mills), in-betweenness (Bhabha), transitionality (Winnicott), scapegoating (Girard), nearness (Jansen), embrace (Volf) and bridge-building (Boske).

The study uses a phenomenological approach to describe and interpret the life histories of the participating student leaders. I drafted the four racial biographies of the four student leaders in conjunction with the students, which were then analysed for patterns of experiences that reveal shifts in racial knowledge and identity in and across lives. On the one hand, the students reproduced the racial ignorance and the hierarchies of racial distance that marked their lifeworlds. However, on the other hand, the students behaved in alternative ways to the norm of their environments. They built friendship across racial divides and challenged cultural codes and norms.

The different and competing realities of racial distance and togetherness reveal a continued struggle between knowledge defined by ignorance and knowledge defined by the transitional context of post-apartheid South Africa. Similarly, their alternative experiences of race in a changing society reveal an alternative racial identity that emerge over time in their lives, an identity of in-betweenness. A synthesis of the emerging themes revealed successive moments of struggle with racial ignorance and alternative knowledge in their lives prior to and on campus, and prior to, during and after Reitz.

The students learned to reproduce racial ignorance at school and at home prior to arriving on campus. On campus they faced radical racial distances prior to and immediately after Reitz. But, the trauma of the incident also disrupted the established racial hierarchies of their environment. Thereafter the post-Reitz interventions raised their consciousness about race and racial hierarchies so that ignorance dissipated.

At the same time, the transitional nature of their racially integrating schools and local communities compelled new knowledge and identities different to established black and white identities. However, at school and on campus prior to Reitz, the students faced reprisals for their attempts at racial in-betweenness and breaking with racial codes and norms. Reprisals discouraged and cast doubt on new knowledge and identity. They internalised this rejection of their alternative knowledge, but rediscovered its value when the post-Reitz interventions for change embraced in-betweenness and alternative knowledge and identities. Their conscientisation disrupted racial ignorance and brought their in-betweenness and transitional knowledge to the surface. As ignorance dissipated, their new knowledge and in-betweenness were actualised as racial bridge-building. The study defines the students' struggle with ignorance and transitional knowledge as the struggle of an epistemology of transitionality to emerge in the face of the dominant epistemology of ignorance that marks the post-conflict environment of post-apartheid South Africa. It defines their growing in-betweenness as an emerging ontology of transitionality and uses the notion of bridge-building to define the methodology and praxis of their leadership for racial reconciliation and change.

The study contributes to current scholarship on leadership for change in higher education by describing in detail how student leaders experienced change personally and as part of change interventions on a divided university campus. The study provides new ways to make sense of how student leaders who counter-culturally lead reconciliation on campus become leaders for change and the social, cultural and political influences that mediate their transition. The study also contributes potential theoretical readings of transitionality, bridge-building and reprisal as important concepts to theorise leadership for change in higher education. The study recommends further research to test the transferability of the findings of this research.

Key words: bridge-building; leadership for change; in-betweenness; racial reconciliation; student leadership; transitionality.

SAMEVATTING

Die studie beoog om sin maak van die lewenservarings van studenteleiers wat besig is met rasseversoening op ’n universiteitskampus, deur hulle stryd met rassekennis en -identiteit te ondersoek. Vier studenteleiers, twee mans en twee vroue, waarvan twee swart en twee wit is, het aan die studie deelgeneem. Hulle was senior studenteleiers wat ’n openbare rol gespeel het in rasseversoening op kampus na afloop van ’n traumatiese insident van rassediskriminasie by Reitz, ’n manskoshuis op kampus.

Die studie is bemoelik deur die afwesigheid van bestaande literatuur oor die saamgestelde temas van studenteleierskap, rassekennis en -identiteit en versoening.’n Breedvoerige literatuuroorsig oor studentebetrokkenheid, studenteleierskap en studentediversiteit het egter kritiese temas en leemtes toepaslike vir die studie in navorsing oor diversiteit en verandering in hoër onderwys uitgewys. ’n Raamwerk van konsepte is ontwikkel om die narratiewe data van die studie te interpreteer. Dit sluit onder andere die idees van bewuswording (Freire), rasse-onkunde (Mills), tussen-in-wees (Bhabha), transitionaliteit (Winnicott), die sondebok (Girard), nabyheid (Jansen), omarming (Volf) en brugbou (Boske) in.

Die studie maak van ’n fenomenologiese benadering gebruik om die lewensgeskiedenisse van die studenteleiers te beskryf en te vertolk. Die navorser en die deelnemers het saam die vier rasse-biografieë opstel, wat ontleed is vir patrone van belewnisse wat skuiwe in rassekennis en -identiteit in en tussen hulle lewens, uitgewys het. Aan die een kant het die studente die rasse-onkunde en rashiërargie wat hulle lewenswêrelde bepaal het, herhaal. Aan die ander kant het die studente op alternatiewe maniere as wat die norm van hulle omgewings is, opgetree deur vriendskappe oor rassegrense heen te bou en kulturele kodes and norms uit te daag. Die verskillende en kompeterende werklikhede van rasse-afstande en -samehorigheid wys ’n voortslepende stryd uit tussen kennis wat deur onkunde gedefinieer word, en kennis wat deur ’n oorgangskonteks gedefinieer word. Net so wys hulle alternatiewe belewenisse van ras in ‘n veranderende samelewing op ’n alternatiewe rasse-identiteit wat met verloop van tyd in hulle lewens na vore tree, ‘n tussen-in identiteit.

’n Sintese van die temas wat na vore tree, wys opeenvolgende oomblikke van ’n stryd met rasse-onkunde en alternatiewe kennis uit in die studente se lewens voor en op kampus, en voor, tydens en na afloop van Reitz.

Die vier studenteleiers het voor hulle op kampus aangekom het, op skool en by die huis geleer om rasse-onkunde te herhaal. Op kampus voor en onmiddellik na Reitz het radikale rasse-afstande hulle in die gesig gestaar. Maar, die trauma van die insident het ook die gevestigde rassehiërargieë van hulle omgewing omvergewerp. Die intervensies na die Reitz-voorval het hulle bewustheid oor ras en rassehiërargieë verhoog, sodat onkunde minder geword het. Terselfdertyd het die oorgangsdinamieka van rasse-integrasie in die omgewing, hulle skole en hul plaaslike gemeenskappe, nuwe kennis en identiteit aangewakker, wat anders was gevestigde swart en wit identiteite. Die studente het egter op skool en op die kampus voor Reitz vergelding in die gesig gestaar weens hulle pogings om tussen-in rasse te staan en van raskodes en -norme weg te breek. Vergelding het nuwe kennis en identiteit ontwrig en verdag gemaak. Hulle het die verwerping van hulle alternatiewe kennis geïnternaliseer, maar het die waarde daarvan weer ontdek toe die intervensies vir verandering na die Reitz-voorval, hulle tussen-in-wees en alternatiewe kennis en identiteit omarm het. Hulle bewuswording het rasse-onkunde omver gegooi en hulle tussen-in-wees en oorgangskennis na die oppervlak gebring. Namate onkunde begin verdwyn het, het hulle nuwe kennis en tussen-in-wees sigbaar geword as brugbouery tussen rasse.

Die studie definieer die studenteleiers se stryd met onkunde en oorgangskennis as die stryd van ’n epistemologie van transisionaliteit om na vore te tree in die gesig van ’n oorheersende epistemologie van onkunde wat na apartheid in Suid-Afrika steeds die botoon voer. Dit definieer hulle groeiende tussen-in-wees as ’n groeiende ontologie van transisionaliteit en gebruik die idee van brugbouery om te beskryf hoe hulle dit benader het om, en leiding vir rasseversoening en verandering geneem het. Die studie dra by tot bestaande navorsing oor leierskap vir verandering in hoër onderwys deur te bskryf hoe studenteleiers self verandering as deel van transformasie-intervensies op ’n verdeelde universiteitskampus beleef. Die studie maak op nuwe maniere sin van hoe studenteleiers, wat in weerwil van gevestigde kampuskulture leiding neem met versoening, leiers vir verandering word, asook van die sosiale, kulturele en politieke invloede wat hulle oorgang bemiddel. Die studie voorsien ook ’n moontlike teoretiese uitleg van transisionaliteit, brugbouery en vergelding as belangrike konsepte om teoreties na te dink oor leierskap vir verandering in hoër onderwys. Dit stel verdere navorsing voor om die oordraagbaarheid van die navorsingsbevindings te toets.

Sleutelwoorde: brugbouery; leierskap vir verandering; tussen-in-wees; rasseversoening; studenteleierskap; transisionaliteit.

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KEY TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Key Terms

IDENTITY: For the purposes of the study, I define 'identity' holistically as the agency of individuals and of groups to construct a sense of self and others through lived experience and to maintain a constellation of, among others, memberships, characteristics, values and attitudes. I use the principles of identity described in identity process theory as backdrop for my reading of the identity struggles of the student leaders in this study, which include the principles of centrality, hierarchical arrangement and salience of identity components. method

KNOWLEDGE: For the purposes of the study, I define 'knowledge' as the conscious and hidden knowledge that people gain, hold and enact in relation to others and their social context, as well as the social, political and cultural regimes of knowledge and ignorance at play in the lived experience of individuals. With 'conscious' knowledge I refer to what people consciously know and propagate as authoritative knowledge. We gain and enact conscious knowledge in formal and informal ways, such as through formal school curriculum, and through what parents teach their children. With 'hidden' knowledge I refer to the underlying knowledge that people gain and enact, without consciously being aware of that knowledge. We gain and enact hidden knowledge through life experiences as part of the social hierarchies, codes and processes of our lived environments.

MESSINESS: For the purposes of the study, I define 'messiness' as the non-linear movement in the student leaders' lives as they progress over time from ignorance to critical awareness and then to change leadership in how they make sense of race and racial identity. Their narratives show doubt, relapse and discontinuity as they struggle with naiveté, fear of reprisal and racial complicity, rather than a linear, continued progress toward an ever-increasing confidence to enact critical awareness, disrupt racial hierarchy and lead change. As Jansen aptly defined it, change is 'never a straight line going forward' (2016, p.4). I consider paradox a key feature of messiness as emerges in this study, on the one hand the paradox of unexpected intimacies between black and white student leaders, and on the other the paradoxes of hopelessness in a moment of hope, when the gain critical awareness, but are left confused by the disruption of established racial hierarchies; and of gaining new knowledge in a moment when old knowledge deters it, when reprisal discourages non-conformity, but also teaches them about the best ways to and cost of leading change in the face of hierarchies.

PERFORMANCE: For the purposes of the study, I define 'performance' as what people do as the characters of and actors in their life narratives. They act in response to others' performances and the processes they are part of, which have political and cultural meaning in their social contexts. Similarly other individuals and groups, and the social processes enacted by societal institutions and social codes represent actors that perform in the narratives of lives. Accordingly, I consider the student leaders of this study as 'actors' that 'perform' their biographies, and the roles that other people, social processes and societal institutions play in their student leaders' lives as the performances by other characters in students' life narratives.

RACE: For the purposes of the study, I define 'race' sociologically as a concept that distinguishes groups of people based on observable racial/ethnic differences, but constructed socially and historically through cultural and political discourses and institutions to achieve very real consequences of privilege or oppression.

RECONCILIATION: For the purposes of this study, I define 'reconciliation' as social, political and cultural processes to resolve conflict and reconstruct relationships between different groups with programmes to heal trauma, reform inequality, correct past justices and build shared aspirations. It involves discourses and programmes of memory, apology, forgiveness and restoration to counter discourses and programmes of ignorance, persecution and confrontation.

REPRISAL: I refine the term as part of the research findings, and define 'reprisal' as acts of retaliation or revenge against members of an in-group (such as whites) who make friends with or ally with members of an out-group (such as blacks), or for supporting a policy resisted by an in-group, because the policy either contests established norms and codes of that group (such as hazing) or creates closer ties with members of an out-group (such as racial integration). The same is true the other way around, of black students acting against other black students who forge ties with whites or who challenge the established norms and codes of blackness (such as radical political affiliation). Such acts of reprisal range from non-violent actions such as snubbing to direct attacks, verbal or physical, against the person moving outside of his or her in-group, or for challenging the in-group norms of identity, values and knowledge. Reprisals are different from formal reprimand, because it must employ uncodified and hidden forms of retribution specifically when non-conforming in-group members base their disruptive behaviour on morally sound reasoning. The in-group is unable to punish its members openly for the fear of appearing to behave immorally (which in actual fact it does).

For this reason, reprisals find public expression as covert acts by a collective of the in-group (such as sport teams that shun a team member) and through impersonal institutional processes (such as a selection process that excludes a strong athlete in team selection).

I conceptually refine the term in the discussion of the research findings to include cultural and political performances that promise belonging, pretend support for counter-cultural agency and threaten non-conformity, as well as scapegoating, betraying, isolating and exiling divergent group members.

STUDENT LEADERS: For the purposes of this study I define 'student leaders' as students who hold official positions as student representatives, which they are elected to by the student community, in the case of this study as student leaders of university residences, student associations and campus student governance structures.

TRANSITIONALITY: I refine the term as part of the research findings, and define 'transitionality' as students' experience of being and behaving 'in between' prescribed identities of their social environment (such as white or black; conservative or radical) and their identities-in-practice (as bridgebuilders between white and black). It is, moreover, the *tension* such students experience between the demand to 'conform to who they really are' (the expectations of others and their environment) and the limits this put on them to enjoy diversity and become 'diverse people' who build bridges between groups (their own aspirations).

I propose 'transitionality' as key term to express how students lived their 'in-betweenness' at school in racialised communities and thereafter on a campus in the throes of racial integration among black and white students for whom the traditional markers of binary white and black affiliations were still strongly in place. In the struggles of such transition, the students 'rediscover' and learn to appreciate their earlier experiences of in-betweenness (such as when they help others to reconcile with out-groups) as strength for leading reconciliation and change. Over time they become more and more adept at negotiating the cultural codes of rival affiliations, yet remain well-grounded in one (such as ethnic-culturally; Sesotho or Afrikaans) without 'belonging' in a static way to any one such affiliation. For them, transitionality becomes a choice, affirming their in-betweenness and defining what they aspire to be as young leaders.

Acronyms

Born Free: A reference the generation of South Africans born after 1990 and considered as the first post-apartheid generation less likely to be governed by racial thinking.

BSTF: Broad Student Transformation Forum, a student forum established to draft a new constitution for the Student Representative Council.

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training.

ISC: Interim Student Committee, a student committee established to oversee the functions of a Student Representative Council (SRC), after the SRC was suspended and during the process to develop a new SRC-constitution.

KOVSIES: Kovsies is the affectionate name used by the university community to refer to the University of the Free State. It comes from the acronyms for the names of the colleges the former Afrikaans universities originated from, in this case the 'Kollege van die Oranje Vrystaat' – College of the Orange Free State, with the acronym KOV, which became KOV-sies (-sies is an Afrikaans word form that shows endearment).

PO10SEE: Potency Camp, a leadership development camp organised by the Student Representative Council to recruit and develop new student leaders, and one of the programmes in student life that encouraged inter-racial interaction.

PRIME: Shorthand for *primarius* and *primaria*, which generally refer to a role of distinction at a university. At the University of the Free State these terms refer to the elected chairperson of the student executive committee of the male or female student residences of the university.

SAHRC: South African Human Rights Commission.

SASCO: South African Student Congress, the political organisation that in its membership on campus represented the interests of black students, and is affiliated with the ruling party, the African National Congress.

VF+: Vryheidsfront Plus (Freedom Front Plus), a political party that through membership of its student branch on campus represented the interests of white students.

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PREFACE, THE REITZ INCIDENT AND PINK FLOYD'S THIRD FACE

Front Cover: *The Division Bell*, by Storm Thorgerson, 1994[1]

The lives of bridgebuilders are lives of in-betweenness – a 'third face' of knowledge and identity that (in this study) emerges in-between the 'two faces' of racial opposites inescapably set in a struggle for power. We see a 'third face' in the life narratives of the people of this study.

Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato were student leaders at the University of the Free State that worked towards racial harmony in the aftermath of a horrific racist incident. As they grow up and become change leaders in a transforming society they struggle with the 'two faces' of black and white identity to define their racial in-betweenness as a 'third face' and a foundation for the ways in which they brokered change. Similar to the third face in the image above, bridge-building as logic of knowledge and identity is fully and always present, separate from and yet part of the binary opposites of the racial hierarchy. A third face is an optical illusion that encourages the viewer to try and clearly see what seems to lie beneath the surface – to realise and hold a new perspective.

The talking heads, created by Thorgerson as front cover for the 1994 Pink Floyd album, 'Division Bell', offers a precise illustration of the theory of 'transitionality' that emerged from this study.

[1] http://www.stormstudiosdesign.com. Accessed on 25/01/16.

Thorgerson (2015, p. 130) explains, 'the single eyes of the two faces looking at each other become the two eyes of a single face looking at you … like an optical illusion, which was even better because it meant that the viewer was interacting, or communicating, with the image directly, viscerally'. Thorgerson (2015, p. 128) developed the concept of the two talking heads to illustrate the album's themes of "restricted communication, defence, isolation, ambiguity, holding opposing feelings at the same time, being unsure of the merit of a decision, not knowing or communicating what was experienced and contradictory communication."

In the life narratives of the four student leaders we see an underlying in-betweenness that struggles to surface as conscious identity – attempted in friendship across racial barriers and courageous acts designed to challenge entrenched racial codes and cultures in their university context, but always deterred by reprisals for not conforming to the norms of racial distance. On the surface of their lives, we see the opposites of black and white faces, struggling for dominance in the established hierarchies of race. However, we also see glimpses of in-betweenness, a third face, which becomes actualised as knowledge and identity when embraced in the interventions for change on their campus. In that embrace the third face of 'bridge-building' staked its claim as way of 'being', 'knowing' and 'doing' change – bridge-building as an ontology, epistemology and methodology of change.

Yet, true to the optical illusion Thorgerson employed in the talking heads, the 'third face' of transitionality is at once there and not there. As the sunlight on the sculptures in the field changes over time, different parts of the heads are highlighted. Every day offers new perspectives on the three faces, even as all three are always there, without pause present in the field. Similarly, seen and not seen, definitive and not, bridge-building is clearly visible when you look at its performances, but only intuitively present when you focus on the more familiar performances of racial opposites in life narratives.

Here I offer an attempt to describe one picture of the 'third face' of in-betweenness as it was revealed among the 'talking heads' of race in the 'changing light' of the student leaders' lives prior to, during and after the Reitz incident at the University of the Free State. It is a picture of critical consciousness replacing naiveté, of in-betweenness becoming bridge-building and of transitionality that finally trumped ignorance as foundation for being, knowing and doing. It is the story of four bridgebuilders and how they came to change their world – the world of Reitz.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Are post-apartheid generations destined to repeat their broken past? Could they interrupt their "knowledge in the blood", their received racial knowledge and trauma, to advance inclusive social justice and transformation?

These questions lie at the heart of this study on racial narratives, knowledge and identities of students leading reconciliation initiatives at a South African university, the University of the Free State (UFS). Following a traumatic incident of racial discrimination on campus, their agency for change provided a counter-narrative to persistent struggles with difference and diversity at college campuses. Exploring these struggles in this case through the problem of persistent racial prejudice on campuses, the study aims to draw conclusions for institutional transformation and diversity in higher education.

Racial discrimination in South African higher education was highlighted in 2008, following a racist incident at the UFS – the Reitz incident. Four white, male students offered food they reportedly urinated in to five black domestic workers at the conclusion of a ritualised interaction between them, which the students designed to protest racial integration of campus residences at the university. A widely distributed video of the incident gained considerable outrage, triggering immediate interventions for change at the university. A ministerial investigation on progress with transformation and the elimination of discrimination at public higher education institutions followed (Soudien, 2010).

Subsequent reports on the change interventions introduced from 2008 onward at the university showed marked increases in positive interaction amongst students of different races and support for institutional transformation (South African Survey of Student Engagement, 2010; UFS Residence Transformation Reports, 2012). These reports revealed a significant and unexpected outcome, namely rapid progress with racial reconciliation and inclusivity achieved among students in residences and generally on campus, as well as highlighted the prominent role of student leaders in the process of change. These outcomes of the post-Reitz interventions offer an ideal case study to investigate change leadership for racial reconciliation and student diversity at university campuses.

1.1 Reitz: the incident

'Reitz' refers to "Reitz Kamerwonings", the name of the men's residence of the University of the Free State where the racist incident that is at the center of this study took place. As part of and in preparation for student cultural event hosted in their residence, four students of Reitz in 2007 produced a video to protest the interventions of the university for racial integration in campus residences – a video that saw them win a prize at the event.

However, against the students' intentions, early in 2008 the video was leaked and went viral on the Internet. The video immediately gained local and international notoriety and was met with outrage and wide condemnation. It plunged the university community into crisis, raised questions regarding transformation in higher education and cast doubt on the success of racial reconciliation in post-Apartheid South Africa. Extraordinary interventions for deep change at the university soon followed, but also national interventions to measure progress with transformation in public higher education. The outrage at the video and extraordinary interventions that followed responded to the actions and visuals in the video[2], as much as it responded to the layers of injustice the video revealed.

In the video the four white students make five black workers, four woman and one man, participate in a mock selection programme for placement in the residence, ostensibly as part of their initiative to support the policy of racial integration of residences. The students and domestic workers of their residence knew one another intimately – a relationship later explained by the students and workers as one of 'mothers and sons'. This claim of intimacy was startlingly at odds with the implicit violence of the role-play in the video.

As part of the selection programme the workers play the role of black candidates who compete for placement in Reitz. In different scenes the workers enact demeaning activities reminiscent of the traditional hazing practices that first year students were subjected to in men's residence at the time. With loud encouragement of the white students, they compete to see who can gulp down alcoholic drinks the quickest, win a foot race at the athletics track and practice various team moves in a game of rugby. The activities increase in intensity to reach a final and climatic event, with the workers attempting to swallow and keep down a concoction of food and various substances while on their knees.

[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4jq_sucA34. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.

This scene also reveals the climax of the students' intended protest against racial integration, when unbeknownst to the workers, one of the students with his back to the camera appears to urinate in the concoction soon to be served to the workers. After this final test one of the students announces the winner, one of the women, whom they invite to join them every weekend for a drink in the "*Bond*", the pub of the residence, and to sleep over in their rooms. They also invite her to bring friends, other "*Setebes*" along. Then follows the concluding message of the video, with the statement, "at the end of the day this is what we really think of integration" flashing on the screen. However, this is not the conclusion of the video, which ends with a final question posed to one of the female workers, asking what "*Setebe*" means. She answers, "it means '*hoermeid'* – prostitute and slave.

The university campus saw violent protests in the days immediately after the video, with images of black protesters demanding justice and riot police with armoured vehicles maintaining order. Protesters disrupted classes, which were then cancelled, and rumours of revenge attacks on white woman and bomb threats did the rounds. The four white students were dismissed from the university, expelled from the campus and criminally charged. The university closed the Reitz residence and the Rector of the university resigned. The National Minister of Education appointed a task team to investigate progress with transformation and social cohesion at public universities.

The crises caused by Reitz for the University of the Free State went beyond a crisis of students' racial attitudes. At the time the university was considered a case study of successful racial integration at former white, conservative Afrikaans university campuses, also because of the particular context of the university as part of its largely rural province.

The Afrikaner community in the province, known earlier as the Boer (farmer) or Voortrekker (pioneer) community, are the descendants of Dutch settlers who moved to the region in the mid-19th century after they trekked inland away from what was then the Dutch, and later British, colony at the Cape of Good Hope. The Voortrekkers established a Boer Republic for the Orange Free State in the same region as the Basotho people, also established as a nation in this part of the country in the 19th century under the leadership of King Moshoeshoe. The black community of the Free State are Basotho descendants.

The Boer Republic fought a protracted war against British rule from 1899 to 1902, which earlier was known as the Anglo Boer War, but recently was renamed (correctly) as the South African War to reflect the involvement and lived trauma of all communities during the war. However, the severe trauma caused by the British concentration camps for Boer woman and children is a brutal aspect of the region's history that echoes through to Reitz. Boer woman and children were forcibly removed from their farms, often with their workers, while the men were sent away as combatants or interned outside the country as POWs. They were detained in several concentration camps across the Free State region, with separate camps detaining black (Basotho) workers from the Boer farms.

More than 26,000 Boer woman and children died in the concentration camps from malnutrition and disease, accounting for more than a quarter of the estimated total fatalities during the war of nearly 100,000. 20,000 British and 14,000 Boer troops lost their lives, while black deaths in the concentration camps were not recorded, but estimated to be as many as 20,000.[3] The war left a permanent scar on the memory of people in the Free State, especially because of the number of woman, children that died in the camps – Bloemfontein hosts the South African (Anglo Boer) War Museum and Woman's Memorial that recounts these traumas.

The war ended in 1902 and in 1904 the University of the Free State was established. Bloemfontein became a 'laboratory for the formation of Afrikaner identity' (Fairbanks, 2013). In 1912 the National Party (NP) was established in the city to represent Afrikaner constituencies in the Union of South Africa that was established in 1910 as part of the British Empire. The NP became the ruling party in 1948 and in 1961 established and governed the Republic of South Africa as an apartheid state – the final victory for Afrikaner self-determination over British rule.

Several of the campus residences of the University of the Free State of the Free State were named for key public figures reflecting this history. One of the women's residences, for instance, is named for Emily Hobhouse, a British welfare worker revered by the Afrikaner community for her work during the war to lighten the plight of the woman and children in the concentration camps (Brits, 2016).

[3] https://www.britannica.com/event/South-African-War. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.

Two of men's residences were named for Barry Hertzog, a former Boer general, who became Premier of the South African Union and campaigned for secession from the British Empire, and for Hendrik Verwoerd, an Afrikaner professor, who became the South African Premier leading the establishment of the Republic of South Africa and is considered the 'architect of apartheid' (Cole, 2010).

However, the city is an important site in the history of the struggle for liberation from black oppression. In 1912, the same year as the establishment of the NP, the African National Congress (ANC), which is the South African liberation organisation that since 1994 has been the ruling party of a democratic South Africa, was also was founded in Bloemfontein as the South African Native National Congress. Only recently, in 2015, one of the campus residences was named for a key figure in the liberation movement, namely Beyers Naude, a prominent Afrikaner leader who worked for racial justice during apartheid.

These histories of white and black, and Afrikaans (Boer) and English (British), traumas make for deep fault lines of racial divides in this region of the country today. The racial hierarchies of white ownership and black labour in the agriculture and mining economies of the province mirrors these histories. The racially and culturally divided provincial politics also mirrors the region's divided past, with the membership of the three largest political parties in the province consisting of and associated with different racial and cultural constituencies; the Freedom Front Plus, the Democratic Alliance and the African National Congress are broadly associated with Afrikaner and white (English) and black constituencies respectively. For this reason Jansen (2016) fittingly introduces and describes the province as 'the misnamed Free State' in his analysis of the post-Reitz world on campus – the region is in actual fact not free from its racially divided past, so that the racial and cultural divisions of a fairly recent history continued on campus in the conflict between white and black students.

At the time of Reitz, the university had come a long way, but the incident revealed and reflected the deep fault lines of racial divides lingering under the surface in this region of the country**.** The interventions for racial integration that caused the students to produce the Reitz-video were not the university's first project to desegregate its campus residence, but part of an ongoing process of institutional transformation The first black students were accepted as early as 1990, with a greater number of black students registering from 1993 onward, when the university adopted a new language policy (see timeline below, Figure 1).

Table 1: Timeline of South African and university events

South African Context		University of the Free State
	1978	Post-graduate black students accepted
	1990	Open enrolment for black students
	1993	Bi-lingual language policy (English and Afrikaans)
First democratic elections	1994	
South African Qualifications Authority established	1995	
	1996	Violent racial clashes on campus
White paper on Higher Education Transformation	1997	Racially segregated residences
Higher Education Act		
National Plan for Higher Education	2001	
Mergers/Incorporations of public universities	2003	
	2005	Black students protest institutional racism
	2006	
	2007	New policy to increase diversity in residences
	2008	Violent protest by campus residences
		Reitz incident
		Reitz Residence Closed
		Reitz Four expelled and criminally charged
		Rector resigns
		iGubu Residence Diversity and reconciliation project
Ministerial committee on higher education transformation		Training for new student leaders
	2009	First black Rector appointed
		Reitz Reconciliation process launched
		Racially diverse residence placements
National higher education summit	2010	New Dean of Students appointed
		First black president of the student council elected
		Black students protest at intervarsity rugby match
		Student Council suspended
	2011	Interim Student Council
		Broad Student Transformation Forum (BSTF) established
		Reitz workers and students reconcile
		New Student Constitution for student governance adopted
	2012	Student life colleges introduced
		(Participant interviews of study done)
Higher education transformation oversight committee established	2013	

The new language policy moved away from Afrikaans alone, to allow for classes in Afrikaans and English. Over the following decade the university's student numbers and student racial diversity increased dramatically, growing from 9,300 students in 1990 to 25,351 in 2004, with the percentage of black students increasing from 4,2.% in 1990 to 64,8% in 2004. This trend continued in the decade thereafter, so that by 2014 overall student numbers were at 33,000, with the percentage of black and white students at 72% and 28% respectively[4]. At the Bloemfontein campus, which was the centre of racial conflict at the university, white students in 2014 made up 39% of the student population.[5]

The racial profile of students at other universities in the country changed at a slower rate. At the University of Cape Town, for instance, which is the oldest university in the country, black students in 1989 constituted, 24.7% of the student population and this number slowly increased to 51% by 2007 (Kessi & Cornell, 2015). At the University of Stellenbosch, which is the oldest Afrikaans university in the country, black students were 5.4% of the student body in 1990 and 33,1% in 2012.[6]

The rapid increase in student numbers and shift in the student racial profile negatively impacted its capacity to student accommodation on campus. In 1990, 30% of students could access residences, while only 12% could do so by 2008. The demand for the distribution of beds to reflect the racial profile of the student body increased, which lead to several attempts during the 1990's to achieve racial integration in the residences. However, these did not succeed, but lead to continuous and violent racial conflict. The competing demands of black and white studentes fuelled the conflict, with black students (with higher levels of poverty and therefore more need for accommodation) demanding more space, and white students demanding that the university protect their rights as current residents and the traditional heritage and cultures of the campus residences. The conflict escalated into regular violent confrontations to such an extent that one of the men's residences demanded that the university build a wall through the middle of the residence to separate black and white students. The university obliged and peace was restored in that residence. In order to resolve the continuing racial violence on campus, the university reluctantly acceded to students' requests for an informal arrangement that black and white students occupy separate residences, inadvertently agreeing to racially segregated residences.

[4] University of the Free State Transformation report, 2004-2014.
[5] Transformation at Public Higher Education Institutions, South African Human Rights Commission, 2016.
[6] See http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Pages/Student-Profile.aspx. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.

This was considered an interim arrangement to achieve peace and not a policy position. The decision achieved immediate peace on campus without limiting the growing racial diversity of the student body, however at the cost of a degree of racial segregation.

The university was considered overall as an example of successful racial integration – the student body was overwhelmingly black, black and white could access accommodation, the language policy ensured equal access to classes and the campus had secured racial peace. In 2002 former President Nelson Mandela accepted an honorary degree from the university, which was taken as a sign of recognition for the work it has done for racial reconciliation and transformation.

Embarking on a next phase of its project of institutional transformation, the university, through its Council in 2007, adopted a new policy to increase diversity in residences. The aim of the policy was to desegregate the campus residences, but the decision to racially integrate the campus residences and the new policy met with severe opposition, mainly from white students and their constituencies. The implementation of the policy was hampered by two very particular factors, namely the racially divided nature of campus life and how deeply entrenched the established residences cultures were specifically in the men's residences. The university traditionally managed men's residences very informally, with residence heads not housed at a residence and responsibility for residence cultures and programmes left fully in the hands of the students. This meant that students in men's residences were managed as if they were separate entities from the university, and therefore free to contest policy decisions and programmes for change of the university.

Campus life was racially divided on a number of levels. As a result of the language policy that allowed for separate English and Afrikaans classes, black students attended English classes and white students Afrikaans classes. Student community building programmes continued with established and traditional white and Afrikaans student life activities as before. This ensured that black residences either withdrew from such programmes, or created their own programmes in parallel to formally recognised programmes. Political parties and parliamentary representatives were given unlimited access to residences, so that black and white students registered with different parties based on their racial agendas. The faith communities on and around campus also were divided by race, with black and white students attending mono-racial congregations.

In the context of untransformed residential cultures and a racially divided campus community, the horror of Reitz, with hindsight, seemed inevitable, and its most authentic witness. It is from the complexity of this divided world that the four student leaders of this study struggled to break free, and shift from racial ignorance to taking on the role of bridge builders who could lead change. The shifts in the lives of the four student leaders intimated in the research problem and questions of my study, namely the problem of change leadership on racially divided campuses and this leads the research to explore what higher education may learn from their experiences of race and change, and from the ways in which they made sense of their transition from naïve participants in racial divides, to leaders that overcame these divides on the campus.

1.2 Rationale of the study

The study derived its rationale from my experience as a participant and university leader during the post-Reitz change interventions, and from the struggle with student diversity in higher education.

I was the team leader of the consultants that the university appointed in 2008 to resolve the racial conflict in campus residences, and to support the implementation of the new policy to increase diversity in the residences – the policy the four students protested against with the Reitz-video. In 2010 I joined the university as the Dean of Student Affairs. This meant that at the time of the participant interviews of this study in 2012, I had been directly involved with students and student leaders in the design and implementation of the post-Reitz interventions in residences for five (5) years from 2008 to 2012 – the exact time period this study focused on and the four student leaders of the study arrived and became leaders in their residences and on campus.

My engagement with student leaders during this time allowed me to observe in person how they struggled with the post-Reitz process for reconciliation and change. I witnessed and was struck by the quick pace and the depth of the shifts taking place in the racial perspectives of student leaders, how they engaged with diversity and how they were leading change on campus. It seemed to me that the pace and depth of the changes were far quicker and greater than what the post-Reitz interventions we designed and implemented could achieve. I had the sense that the change process drew on resources as yet unexplored and that the contributions

of student leaders were central to this underlying and undefined dynamics of change and change leadership. With this study I wanted to make sense of these observations.

Furthermore, in the broader context of higher education Reitz illustrated the difficulties institutions face when engaging the ever-increasing diversity of student bodies, and as such raises questions for scholarship on student diversity on campuses. Campus diversity increasingly takes centre stage in education discourse, in the light of continued incidents of discrimination amongst students around the world. The global trend is illustrated by several incidents reported in global and local media at the time of this research, including incidents in the USA at the Universities of California Davis (2015) and Oklahoma (2015), where students, amongst others, chanted racist songs en route to a fraternity dance.

Other incidents include several in the UK at the Universities of London (2015) and Birmingham (2015) and in South Africa at the Universities of Stellenbosch (2014), North-West (2014) and Free State (2014) with inter alia, white students painting their faces black (the racist meme of 'blackface') and to use the Nazi salute as a form of greeting in residences. Several studies confirm the trend that gender, racial and ethnic discrimination persists, rather than fade among students on campuses, most visibly in the wake of repressive regimes, such as apartheid – current literature show that post-apartheid students in South African higher education conform to this trend and continue to employ apartheid racial themes in constructing identities.[7]

The transformation of students' intergenerational received knowledge and identities are thus a crucial part of South African higher education's ambitions for transformation in knowledge, identity and curriculum (Cloete, 2014; Soudien, 2010). This is especially true in South African higher education due to its apartheid history of racially based universities (Elliker, Coetzee & Kotze, 2013), among which the University of the Free State was one of the more conservative institutions, strongly aligned with the apartheid regime.

However, Harper and Hurtado (2007) reveal in their study on campus climates that it is institutional culture that takes priority in all higher education transformation. Recurring incidents of racial discrimination at college and university campuses are increasingly interpreted as signals of higher education failure at programmes of inclusivity (Lewins, 2010).

[7] See Ayalon, 2014; Campani, 2014; Caplan & Ford, 2014; Fleetwood, 2012; Jackson, Van de Vijver & Biela, 2013; Jansen, 2012; Lefko-Everett, 2012; Maphunye *et al*., 2014; Mattes, 2012; Poteat & Spanierman, 2012; Puttick, 2011; Seabi *et al*., 2014.

1.3 Scope and questions

Studies on the construction or disruption of racism on campuses most often focus on the relational (intergroup and contact), pedagogical (knowledge), or personal (social and identity) aspects of students' experience of race. Zuma (2013) shows that Gordon Allport's (1954) *contact hypothesis* still features prominently in intergroup and contact theory and is widely used to investigate racial attitudes among students (Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Bowman & Park, 2014; Christ *et al*., 2014 and Pagotto *et al*., 2013).

The approach features strongly also in South African studies such as those by April, Loubser and Peters (2012) and by Finchilescu and Tredoux (2010), which outline the major factors involved and the questions to be posed in order to study intergroup contact in resolving racial tension. Saperstein, Penner and Light's (2013) review of literature and Carter's study (2013) argue for the relevance of *social identity theory*. Interestingly, Carter found that individuals' behaviour is consistent with activated identities. Literature reviews of recent identity studies focus on the experience of multi-racial students, individual racial fluidity, intersectionality of racial and other identities, and the continuity of identity (Meeus, 2011; Newman & Lannoy, 2014; Saperstein & Penner, 2012; Toosi *et al*., 2012; Warner & Shields, 2013; Williams *et al*., 2012). Most prominent when it comes to pedagogical theories used as an interpretative framework, Jansen (2009a) defines the problem of sustained patterns of racism as a matter of intergenerational (received) knowledge – what he calls 'knowledge in the blood'. He describes the problem as follows (Jansen, 2012):

> If they didn't live during apartheid, many asked, how did they acquire such hateful knowledge and act on that knowledge to humiliate and murder black people? Knowledge in the Blood revealed a powerful flow of intergenerational knowledge from the home through schools and churches, along peer groups and cultural clubs that together conveyed a steady stream of bitter knowledge into the hearts and minds of white youth.

Several studies support this notion that 'bitter' or 'troubled' knowledge transferred among generations in society limits students' capacity for change, mostly by triggering nostalgic memory. Suransky and Van der Merwe (2014) develop this notion to advance institutional

transformation and call for new understandings of *intra*-generational understandings and practices of solidarity.

Current literature argues for pedagogies that emphasise generational trauma, critical dialogue and nostalgic emotions to disrupt and transform students' traumatic racial knowledge.[8] As part of pedagogical considerations that work to interrupt troubled knowledge, Jansen (2009) also challenges critical theory for its limited impact on transforming students' 'knowledge in the blood', as a result, amongst others, of its construction of the world only as divided between the oppressor and the oppressed. Arguably, this disallows students from shifting positions in relation to one another. Jansen outlines as critical elements of *post-conflict pedagogy*, amongst others, the power of indirect and partial knowledge and its interruption; the reframing of black and white as either victors or victims; and the acknowledgement of brokenness. Several studies develop similar notions of post-conflict pedagogy and argue for engagement with the emotional value of troubled knowledge, for the recognition of mutual vulnerability and for dialogic engagement for transformation (Keet *et al*., 2009; Gill & Niens, 2014; Zembylas, 2013).

In this study, I seek to understand the different personal experiences of the four student leaders by exploring the initiatives they undertook to lead reconciliation. I will read and interpret their experiences of race prior to and during post-Reitz campus interventions for change. In the process, I will seek to answer questions regarding racial knowledge and identity and the shifts in lived experience and sense-making of race that enabled the students to lead change. I will explore the notion that post-apartheid students from diverse racial backgrounds during their early lives also gain the knowledge and form the identities that enable them to be leaders for reconciliation, rather entrenching social distance.

My research questions are:

- How did the participating student leaders' experience of race, racial knowledge and identities change over time? And what patterns of change in knowledge and identity are noticeable in their own lives?
- How did their experiences as student leaders of change on campus transform their racial knowledge and identities?

[8] See Chinyowa, 2013; Frankish & Bradbury, 2012; Del Carmen Salazar, 2013; Du Preez, 2014; Gill & Niens, 2014; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012; Spear, 2014; Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2014; Zembylas, 2013, 2014.

- How did their own experiences over time of race and change influence their leadership for racial reconciliation and change?

1.4 Methodology

Two factors are important as methodological considerations of this study, namely its focus on the life stories of the student leaders participating in the research, and the positionality of the researcher as in 'insider', namely in the roles of consultant for the post-Reitz interventions from 2008 – 2009, and then as Dean of Student Affairs from 2010 onward. These are the same years the four student leaders of this study stepped arrived on campus and became leaders during the post-Reitz interventions for change.

In order to make sense of students' leadership for change in violent racial conflict from the perspective of their 'knowledge in the blood', the study analysed the life narratives of students to discern shifts in racial knowledge and identity over time. Explorations of youth experiences in post-conflict environments often use the life history approach as a method, for example in Newman and Lannoy's (2014) study on the rise of the South African post-apartheid generation. Life history as method forms part of the phenomenological tradition, and as such this study has used *interpretative phenomenological analysis* to examine the knowledge and identity of reconciliation. This is a form of inquiry that wants to see afresh, dwell in the minute detail of meanings, explicate phenomena more than only themes and language in all its subtleties (Finlay, 2014; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2012; Van Manen, 2014).

Coe (2012) argues that, as a qualitative investigation, the validity and reliability of such a study are defined in its trustworthiness, coherence and transferability and must be tested through its interpretations and its claims of transferability. This is best achieved by monitoring the study for its rigour in reading and its rigour in writing, as well as the double hermeneutic required to do so – the double activity of reading participant texts in the first instance, and then the researcher analysis as second text (VanScoy & Evenstad, 2015). *Rigorous reading* refers to repeated reading of data for authenticity and the use of continuous bracketing to do so (Petrovskaya, 2014). This must be tested for coherence in the research questions, sampling, adequacy of data and the validation of meaning (Sousa, 2014). *Rigorous writing* refers to rich writing that describes phenomena for provocative impact (Van Manen, 2014). The study achieved rigorous reading and writing by using triangulation activities in

data collection, participant quotes from interviews, rich descriptions of context, monitoring for coherence between research questions, coding and interpretation. Finally, the themes and findings that emerged were compared against current academic discourse.

Coe (2012) argues that, to ensure rigorous data and reading, purposive sampling is needed in order to provide intensity of analysis. This study therefore recruited student leaders were identified as having played a leading role in racial reconciliation in residences at the university as part of the intervention programme introduced following the Reitz incident. Four (4) student leaders were interviewed for their recognised role as counter-intuitive leaders for reconciliation. Two black students (male and female) and two white students (male and female) participated in unstructured reflecting on their experiences of race and racism during their formative years and their life on campus. The interviews took place in 2012, which ensured stronger data with immediate memory and very little lapsed time between the actual experiences (2007-2012) and its recounting by the student leaders during interviews. Drawing on interview data and in collaboration with the student leaders, I composed biographies of their lives that served as texts for analysis, after approval by the students as a true reflection of their stories told.

Rigour in reading and writing is especially important in studies by "insider researchers", as is the case in this study where the study participants and I were engaged together in the change process on campus, respectively as student leaders and Dean of Students. Drake (2010) argues for reflexivity in rigorous bracketing and coding and transparency with detailed descriptions of context to ensure trustworthiness of insider research – a position of reading and writing considered an advantage for qualitative analyses of the lived experience of study participants.

While the purpose of phenomenological findings is not its application to different contexts, but to enrich understanding and meaning, its transferability becomes possible with detailed descriptions and in comparative (insight cultivating) activities – at best to offer "tentative manifestations" of meaning and considerations for its applicability elsewhere left to the reader. However, Van Manen (2014) shows that transferability in phenomenological research refers to the aim of analysis to reveal essential attributes of a phenomenon, inasmuch as it describes the unique aspects of that phenomenon in the case studies engaged in the research.

I then argue for the transferability of the findings of this study by offering rich descriptions of the unique cases of the students leaders' lived experiences, but also developing theoretical

perspectives to make sense of the phenomenon of knowledge and identity for change leadership.

1.5 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 introduces the background and rationale of the study, namely the increasingly particular case of the Reitz incident at the University of the Free State as illustrative of the importance of campus diversity as lever for change and success in higher education.

Chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature pertaining to student leaders, race and reconciliation, revealing that the study faces a dearth in scholarship on these themes. In order to gain a sense of conceptual landscape relevant to the study, I reviewed international and South African literature on student engagement, student leadership and student diversity.

I emphasise scholarship in student diversity and review the conceptual approaches taken to study race in education, types of change interventions and the racial performances, lifeworlds and alternative experiences of students at university campuses.

Chapter 3 outlines the design and methodological approach taken in the study. I locate the study in the social constructionist framework of the sociology of education, but engage the research as a phenomenological study of the lived experience of student leaders engaged in racial reconciliation. I use life histories as a method to collect data and the critical-incidents technique to develop the biographies of the student leaders as primary data for analysis.

Chapter 4 offers a framework of concepts I used to interpret the data and theorise my findings. I draw on Freirean concepts of humanisation and conscientisation, on Lacanian notions of the symbolic, the imaginative and reality, on the Girardean concept of scapegoating and Bhabha's notion of in-betweenness.

I also draw on the Winnicottean notion of transitionality and the definitions of reconciliation as embraced by Jansen and Volf. I further use Boske's work on bridge-building to develop the theory of change.

Chapter 5 describes the post-Reitz interventions as these emerged from the narrative data. The four student leaders shared critical episodes that affected their knowledge and identity as

change leaders, some of which resulted from the change interventions adopted on campus. The chapter develops a contextual description of the post-Reitz lifeworld on campus as a first story of change relevant to my study – the story of a campus in transition.

Chapters 6-9 contain the life histories of the student leaders of the study, namely the stories of change of Thabelo, Aletta, Dawie and Lerato. While each narrative is unique, the biographies follow a similar narrative structure, one that emerged from a comparative reading of the transcribed interviews. This similarity in structure enables the analysis and synthesis of themes that follow in next chapters.

Chapter 10 presents an analysis of the data of the study, namely to determine patterns of experience and change across narratives, as well as emerging themes and a thematic synthesis developed from a comparative analysis of the critical incidents across lives. The chapter develops a conceptual structure to describe the interrelatedness between the emerging themes, which serve as data to develop and discuss the findings of the study.

Chapter 11 discusses the findings of the study based on the framework of concepts developed earlier. In addition to an overview of the findings of the prior analysis and synthesis, the chapter reports the theoretical development of the findings and introduces an ontological, epistemological and methodological reading of the findings of the study. The chapter describes emerging theoretical perspectives of bridge-building, with reprisal and embrace as theory of change and transitionality as its metatheory.

Chapter 12 offers an overview of the research as a whole, including the people of the study, its design and methodology and its proposed theory of change in bridge-building. The chapter also indicates the limitations of the study and offers recommendations for further research.

1.6 Summary of findings

The participant narratives offer a view on the lives of young people growing up in post-apartheid South Africa and, in their uniqueness, each illustrates the diversity of their lived realities. Read together, their life stories also reveal similarities of experience and sense making, as well as of context, which allow for cross-cutting themes to emerge – the particular interest of this study.

The student leaders' narratives offer surface (manifest) similarities and dissimilarities of racial ignorance and transcendence, underlying (latent) themes of transition emerging over time and continuity with the campus narrative of change prior to and after Reitz. Rather than major divergences as the narratives progress, the themes emerging across their lives show ever-increasing convergences and consistency over time. The most prominent features of their experiences in and responses to racial encounters are already evident at a young age, gain momentum at high school and mature in their struggle with race on campus. Theirs are not narratives that progress toward and from singular events of dramatic turn, but rather narratives of continued struggle with *ignorance* as they progress to *transcendence*, marked by critical events that intensify and develop either of these opposing responses to issues of race.

The campus narrative of racial conflict, reconciliation and transformation prior to and after the Reitz incident shows similar features to and supports the convergence of themes emerging from the student leaders' narratives. As the student leaders of the study did, the campus community struggled with ignorance and progressed to transcendence. The racially segregated reality of campus life and the intensity of racial conflict on campus prior to and during the Reitz incident resembled and aggravated the familiar distances among black and white for these student leaders. Similarly, the campus change interventions for racial togetherness resonated with and matured their earlier, though hesitant, initial transitions of identity and knowledge for diverse students.

The data analysis and synthesis of themes revealed seven (7) findings. I found that the four biographies revealed similar experiences in the student leaders' struggles with race, which transcend the typical polarities of racial hierarchy and overshadow the differences between them. I found that their environments were largely defined by the transitional nature of post-apartheid South Africa, not primarily by the historical racial distances of the past.

The four student leaders discovered their ignorance in similar (converging) life episodes, but also attempted and later matured their racial in-betweenness in unique (diverging) ways. I found similar experiences across lives that punish or embrace their in-betweenness, and which influence their knowledge and identities to lead change in similar ways. This struggle revealed an underlying conflict between ignorance and transitional knowledge, which continued over the course of the student leaders' lives as the struggle to shift from naiveté to critical awareness and then change leadership.

This struggle also highlights the critical finding that shifts in racial knowledge and identity did not occur in a straight line, moving from ignorance to new knowledge and then to change leadership. Change was difficult, marked by paradoxes and contradicting behaviours, with the student leaders oscillating between new intimacies and established racial distances. They attempt to lead change, at first succeeding, but then also failing as they struggle with old ways and habits of racial interaction. Faced with reprisal, they grow tired, but they also gain new courage as part of a community of new leaders operating beyond race.

Finally, as they struggle to lead change, they also gain new ways to make sense of race and claim bridge-building as a cornerstone of new racial knowledge and identity. Bridge-building emerges as a framework to lead change.

My synthesis of the findings revealed a coherent internal conceptual structure that describe the process of change in knowledge and identity emerging from my analysis, as well as the forms taken by ignorance and transitionality in the lives of the four student leaders. Drawing on the Freirean notion of transitivity (Freire, 1996) and the Winnicottean notion of transitionality (Winnicott, 1975), the study argues for *transitionality* as the defining scheme and logic of knowledge and identity in the life stories of the student leaders – a landscape of meaning over time contested by, and yet transcending societal contracts and epistemologies of ignorance. The themes of ignorance, naiveté, reticence, reproduction, hierarchy and reprisal emerge from the data and combine to reveal established and dominant *epistemologies of ignorance*. Reprisal emerged as a core factor of change, with cultural and political projects to disrupt new knowledge in social performances of promise, pretence, threat, betrayal, scapegoating, isolation and exile. Experiences or the threat of reprisal ensure that, prior to its disruption, ignorance matures in the lives of student leaders through a process of ignorance learned, reproduced and radicalised.

The themes of in-betweenness, liminality, nearness, embrace and bridge-building emerge and combine to reveal the underlying and fragile *epistemology of "transitionality"* – a way to "know the world" (bridge-building) that develops from a way of "being in the world" (in-betweenness). Prior to its actualisation in bridge-building, transitionality matures in the student leaders' lives through a process of this transitionality compelled, deterred and embraced. The themes of struggle, transitivity, conscientisation and praxis combine to describe the process of change revealed in the student leaders' journeys with race, knowledge and identity. Most importantly, it is in the movement of transitionality from an underlying to

actualised (on-the-surface) knowledge and identity that a coherent conceptual structure emerges for the lived of the four student leaders. Although this movement is a messy one that reflects to continuous struggle with knowledge and identity, a progression emerges from old to new knowledge over time.

The discussion of the findings introduces possible theoretical perspectives of bridge-building as theory of change and transitionality as metatheory of change. One is the actualised and manifest reality of the other. Transitionality as metatheory provides a scheme of ontology, epistemology and methodology that moves bridge-building beyond pragmatic considerations of change management – from bridge-building as survival tactic to bridge-building as deep change. Bridge-building as theory of change provides a methodology for the praxis of change leadership that moves transitionality from an underlying and unconscious reality to a present reality of agency on the surface of lived experience – from the otherness of in-betweenness to the co-authorship of bridge-building (Kandlbinder, 2013).

Herein lies the significance of the study, namely to locate the experience of change of the students on a meta-theoretical level, as much as a theory of the praxis of change. It develops the conceptual structure of change as experienced by the students and defines the projects of reprisal and embrace as the dialectic of conscientisation and transcendence.

1.7 Significance

The finding of 'transitionality' offers a new perspective on identities during change. Whereas current definitions of 'in-betweenness' in identity relate to hybridity or cosmopolitanism, in this case the students were familiar with and held stereotypical racial or ethnic identities; they did not reject or distance themselves from these identities.

Instead, they considered their 'in-betweenness' a separate identity that enabled them to cross over and move among different groups – an identity of choice. Their transitionality is also different, because it is not a temporary identity that fell away as they moved from school to campus, but rather became stronger and matured as a preferred identity.

In psychological and political definitions of 'in-betweenness', transitionality is considered a passing phase between the old and the new, but in this case students showed progression from an underlying transitional identity at school that became well established after Reitz.

What the experiences of the students reveal is that the uncompromising commitment and coherence of leaders to reconciliation and change in what they did, how they did it and who they were – their intentionality – inspired the students and brought about (caused) their choice for taking on change leadership. The intentionality and symbolic value of who university leaders were, what changes they brought about and how they actually led for change, helped the students to recover their fragile memories of 'in-betweenness' and to mature in identities and knowledge as bridgebuilders – what was pushed beneath the surface (latent) at school, was brought to the surface (manifest) after Reitz to actualise transitionality as organising logic for identity and knowledge. The convergences of narrative themes across the four life stories intimate that *transitional knowledge* and *in-betweenness as identity* is the rule rather than the exception for young people in desegregated schools.

However, this underlying knowledge and identity were so fragile that they quickly lost their sense of 'diversity' in the racialised context of a segregated campus, as much as it shows the intractable power of racial hierarchies that are protected in residence traditions such as initiation and seniority. The messy, but definite emergence of bridge-building, of which the four student leaders were unaware at school (underlying), and that matured as a conscious (surface) identity on campus after Reitz, shows that the lives of 'born-frees' hold two distinct possible futures. They could continue with the troubled racial knowledge of their communities and reproduce racial distance in who they are and what they do, or they were able to do with their transitionality and become bridgebuilders, equally comfortable among black and white, at home, and as a stranger elsewhere. The key to unlocking their transition from reproducing race to building bridges is the *institutional pedagogy/curriculum* schools and campuses employ to engage diversity and change – the symbolic impact and coherence of the real work of its programmes and its leaders for bridge-building.

The study offers new contributions in the debates on student diversity and campus change as it explores notions of racial knowledge and identity specifically as it intersects with students' agency for reconciliation – a research area intimated, but not yet established in current discourses on campus diversity.

Reviews of literature on students' racial attitudes show that most studies maintain the racial binary of black and white in analysis, focusing separately on either white or black attitudes, as is also the case with South African studies, while studies of multiracial individuals engage

alternative identities, but also do not as yet consider intersects of multiracial identity and reconciliation.[9]

The study also is significant for its analysis of institutional transformation in higher education from the perspective of the lived experiences of students. It places their unique first-person accounts within the larger trajectory of each student's life history growing up with race and racism and shows how they, as next generation, may be able to disrupt its intergenerational transfer and its hold among students on campus. Interpretations of their perspectives of the change process may deepen our understanding of race and racism in higher education and offer unique solutions for reconciliation and inclusivity on campuses facing such conflicts around the world.

1.8 Conclusion

In this study, I aim to make sense of the transformation of race relations among students at the UFS from 2008 to 2012, following the traumatic racial incident on campus in 2008 in the form of the Reitz incident with its video of the abusive interaction, protesting racial integration initiatives, made by white, male students of a men's residence forcing black domestic workers to participate in humiliating initiation practices. Amongst other activities, the workers were made to eat food the students urinated in. The incident gained wide-spread notoriety and, becoming known locally and internationally as the Reitz incident (Reitz), associated the negative associations with the university itself. I joined the university as part of the change interventions that followed and was intimately involved in the reconciliation process among students.

As insider-researcher I decided to study the change process the from a 'ground-up'-perspective by reflecting on what students experienced prior to and during the Reitz and the nature of our interventions for change.

On the one hand the study reveals the reality of young people in South Africa today, born free only to struggle, a struggle between two ways of knowing and engaging our world – the struggle between the epistemology of ignorance and an epistemology of transitionality.

[9] See Arndt, 2014; Bhana, 2014; Fleetwood, 2012; Ingrim, Chaudhary & Jones, 2014; Jansen, 2012; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012; Le Roux, 2014; Lucas, 2014; Matias, 2013; Mattes, 2012; Sutherland, 2013; Walker, 2005.

On the other hand, the study reveals how important experiences of reprisal and embrace are in the process of preparing young people for change leadership. Encounters of reprisal and embrace in families, at schools and churches and on the sports field compel different ways of knowing and being. They cause young people in transitional environments to gain the abilities to lead change in difficult circumstances.

The student leaders in this study were unaware of the development of their underlying bridge-building identities at school, but became aware of their role and matured as bridgebuilders on campus after Reitz. Their lives show that born-free South Africans have two distinct possible futures, namely one where they continue the troubled racial knowledge of the past, reproducing racial distance, or another where they co-construct new knowledge of racial togetherness.

How universities lead will thus bring forward and realise, or fail to achieve, what is already present – the freedom of South Africa's transitionals – our next generation of bridgebuilders.

PART I|
RESEARCH DESIGN

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

I review two categories of current literature relevant to the study, namely literature on Reitz as the case study of my research, and literature that reveals established theories to interpret the life narratives of the study.

However, especially relevant to the second part of the review, no current literature directly addresses the specific focus of my research on the lived experience of student leaders engaged in racial reconciliation. Only selected studies in higher education explore student involvement in reconciliation on campuses, while very few studies investigate how student leaders, specifically, experience campus change and change leadership. Rather, the established areas of research that this study relates to are student diversity, student racial attitudes and identities, and student leadership development.

Due to the limited literature on students and racial reconciliation and the silence on the experiences of student leaders, as opposed to other forms of leadership in this regard, this review focuses on a broad analysis of scholarship dealing with student engagement. For this reason I approached the review as an audit of current scholarship relevant to my research questions, namely research on student leaders, racial knowledge and identity, and campus change. I also reviewed the literature for conceptual frameworks relevant to the master themes emerging from the study, and for findings that uncover students' lived experiences of the themes, namely transition, in-betweenness and ignorance (see Table 2, Chapter 10).

I begin the chapter with an overview of the current literature on Reitz and distinguish between studies that only reference the incident, studies that use Reitz as an illustration for its argument and studies that specifically aim to make sense of the event, its causes and its aftermath. In the second part of the chapter I discuss the relevant literature on student engagement, student leadership and student diversity. I discuss conceptual approaches to research on students, race and campus change and review current scholarship on student racial attitudes (racial performances), students' racial contexts (racial lifeworlds) and alternative racial knowledge and identities.

The scope of the study and its potential contribution emerge from this combined review of literature on Reitz, and the current scholarship relevant to student leaders, race and change.

2.1 Literature on Reitz

The growing body of literature on Reitz reveals the hidden violence of the incident itself, the deep trauma it caused, the matching ferocity of response to the video and the sustained efforts for change of the post-Reitz interventions (Fourie, 2008). Reitz was not a bizarre exception to an everyday rule of a peaceful and democratic South Africa. Rather, the incident revealed a continued and intimate struggle of a society with three intersecting and entrenched realities, all sustaining racial injustice, namely racial and gender hierarchies, troubled intergenerational knowledge, and untransformed institutional cultures. In Reitz, these realities of racial distance reached the surface of public life as one combined act of violent discrimination, which revealed higher education's struggle with change in post-apartheid South Africa.

The Soudien Report (Soudien *et al*., 2008) of the ministerial task team appointed to investigate discrimination at public universities offers a foundational reading of Reitz as exemplar of transformation struggles on campuses. The commission published its analysis of trends of change in the "Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination at Public Higher Education Institutions" (Soudien *et al*., 2008).

As scholarship on Reitz progresses, three trends emerge on how the incident features in the literature. These include studies that only *reference* Reitz as illustrative of a contextual reality relevant to a study; studies that introduce and *briefly discuss* Reitz as an example relevant to the research; and studies that *specifically study Reitz* and its aftermath.

The largest number of studies that only reference Reitz does so as an illustration of persistent racial prejudice in post-apartheid South Africa (Soudien, 2009; Modiri, 2011; Scott 2011; Foot, 2013; Clark, 2011; Duncan *et al*., 2014; Potgieter, 2014). Studies that review the Soudien Report also fall into this category, such as Lewins, (2010), Naidoo and Uys (2013) and Bhana (2014).

Binikos and Rugunanan (2015) reference Reitz in a study of student attitudes at another university, while Matthews (2010) does so in a study on communication and social cohesion; Van der Waal (2011), in a discussion on the racial 'us-them typology'; and Wilson-Strydom (2012) in her study on transitions to campus of first-year students.

A second group of studies references Reitz in a focus on institutional pedagogies of reconciliation and the need for curriculum change. This group of studies includes research on institutional change interventions that deal with student and staff racial attitudes and communicative metaphors used in student mentorship for change.[10]

A third group of studies references Reitz as part of narrative studies of lived experiences of racial identity, namely Peterson, Venter and Botha's (2011) study of black students' narratives, De Beer's (2014) study of white students' lives and Ramohai's (2013) study of black woman academic's experiences of change. Similar studies include McDougal's (2013) study of Afrikaner post-apartheid identity and Norgaard's (2015) study of 'Born Free' lived realities.

Several studies, closely related to the trend of only referencing Reitz, briefly introduce and discuss Reitz while studying a relevant, but different question. These mainly focus on the modalities of racial hierarchy of society as revealed in *responses to Reitz*, such as Punt's (2009) study on the use of biblical texts in responses to Reitz, Wasserman's (2010) study of racial strategies in reporting on the incident by Afrikaans media, and Shefer's (2010; 2012) studies that reveal the intersecting realities of race, gender and class in the lives of South African domestic workers.

Several studies use Reitz to investigate post-apartheid white identities, such as studies by Jekwa (2008) to compare white discourses on Reitz and affirmative action, Barnard (2010) on Afrikaner youth racial discourse on Reitz, and Haupt (2012) on a court case against racial integration in the residences by a civic organisation, Afriforum.

Other studies include West's (2010) study on contemporary whiteness and Sutherland's (2013) on new white Afrikaner identities. Some of these studies begin to develop a deeper analysis for making sense of Reitz and reflect on matters of approach in responding to the incident. These include, amongst others, Du Preez's (2014) argument for the use of dialogic nostalgia as pedagogical strategy and Pattman's (2010) study of black residences, as well as Jansen's (2008) argument for the recognition of likeness through brokenness, as a response to the racial debate in the country at the time.

[10] See Du Bruyn and Oelofse, 2012; Esakov, 2009; Ferreira & Janks, 2009; Cross & Naidoo, 2012; Kamsteeg, 2014; Kinnear, 2011; Manenya, 2013; Nel, 2010; Nkonyane, 2014; Nussey, 2012; Praeg, 2011; Soudien, 2011; Van Reenen, 2012; Walker, 2015; Walker & Loots 2016.

The studies that reference or introduce Reitz as example are useful to this study, mainly as evidence of agreement among scholars that Reitz was a signifier and a defining moment for higher education transformation in South Africa (Lewins, 2010, p.127; Van der Merwe & Van Reenen, 2016, p. 2). They provide perspectives of Reitz as an example of the deployment and reach of racial, linguistic and cultural hierarchies in South Africa.

Most notably, Naidoo's (2010) reflection on the positionalities of black and white in the post-Reitz agenda for change and Shefer's (2012) study of the positionality of domestic workers offers valuable perspectives to make sense of Reitz. Similarly, Mordaunt-Bexiga's (2011) study of Reitz as an outcome of rugby-playing masculinities is useful to gain insight in social dynamics at play in the lives of the male student leaders in this study. As interpretative lenses, these studies show how societal hierarchies and institutional cultures combined to cause Reitz, as much as they were exposed in the inhumane conduct of the four students.

Still, while several of these nuances are taken up in further scholarship on Reitz, these studies do not provide a deep analysis of the incident and more specifically, of the processes of reconciliation and change that followed Reitz.

However, though not as numerous as in the trends outlined above, several studies developed deeper analyses to make sense of Reitz and post-Reitz interventions for reconciliation and change. They focus either on the incident or on post-Reitz processes of reconciliation and transformation, with the most recent contributions exploring the experiences of university leaders in the process of post-Reitz change. The most extensive studies in this regard are the recent books by Jansen (2016), Van der Merwe and Van Reenen (2016) and Ambrosio (2017). Further studies on Reitz and its reconciliation process by Soudien (2010), Boesak (2013), and Suransky and Van der Merwe (2014) also offer deeper insights relevant to my study on student experiences following Reitz.

We now know that Reitz was a *crisis of intimacy*, of the intimate entanglements of race that trouble the easy racial categories of 'good black and evil white' – a crisis only resolved through a process of 'drawing near', of nearness through embrace (Jansen, 2016). We also know that Reitz was a *crisis of institutional complicity*, of institutional cultures that reproduce hierarchies of racial distance (Jansen, 2009a; Soudien, 2010c), rather than a case of individual pathology (Jansen, 2009a, p. 343) that seeks to cast the blame for Reitz only on the four perpetrators.

Van der Merwe and Van Reenen (2016) continue the theme of institutional readings of Reitz, but characterise Reitz mainly as a *crisis of legitimacy* in the life of the university community. They show that Reitz became an institutional struggle for pragmatic (institutional value), socio-political (political endorsement), moral (just actions) and cognitive (desirable perceptions) legitimacy (2016, p. 157). We also know that Reitz was a *crisis of leadership* (Jansen, 2009a, p. 343; 2010b, p. 366), which simultaneously positioned the subsequent interventions by the university towards change as a particular opportunity to resolve this crisis.

These definitions of the crisis of Reitz inevitably also imply frameworks to make sense of the processes for reconciliation and campus change following the incident. Most of the literature on post-Reitz interventions focuses on the Reitz reconciliation process, which was the process established by the new Vice-Chancellor to seek authentic and meaningful reconciliation between the workers and the students involved in Reitz.

This process became symbolic of, and is often compared to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The latter followed on South Africa's political transition to democracy. This we see well analysed in Cantero's (2011, p. 109) comparison of public debates in media reports of reconciliation after Reitz and in the TRC. Similar trends emerged for both process of deep rejection of racism, a focus on individuals and resentments and criticism for unfulfilled justice for the black oppressed – Reitz became a second TRC of sorts for South Africans.

Boesak analyses the Reitz reconciliation process as a study in 'radical reconciliation', which is a process equally embraced by coloniser and colonised (2013, p. 19). In the reconciliation process after Reitz, we learn that *radical reconciliation* requires a process seen through the eyes of those that suffered (Boesak, 2013, p. 102) and that the dynamics of power must shift (Boesak, 2013, p. 105). We discover in the Reitz reconciliation process that reconciliation is a response to the 'woundedness' that we identify in and among people and offers a space for righteous anger about injustice (Boesak, 2013, p. 107).

The theme of woundedness also features strongly in Jansen's (2016) continued work on change leadership, which culminates in his book on race and intimacy on divided campuses. In his scholarship on the post-Reitz interventions one discovers the critical importance of *emotional infrastructure* as foundation for reconciliation and change (Jansen, 2010a, p. 15).

Emotional capability depends on university leaders acknowledging "brokenness" as an acknowledgement of their own inward struggle with race (Jansen, 2010b, p. 374). Leading for reconciliation and change in a post-conflict environment requires the capabilities to listen, to disrupt indirect and received knowledge and challenge racial victimhood with cross-racial bonds of hope (Jansen, 2010b, p. 376) – what Jansen calls demonstrative leadership (2010b, p. 379). Smit (2013) continues the theme on leadership in an auto-ethnographic study of her lived experience of Reitz and the post-Reitz processes for change. In a very creative study of images, she draws a comparison between the Red and the White Queens of *Alice in Wonderland* to distinguish pre- and post-Reitz leaders. What differed in the approach of leadership after Reitz, as much as in the content of the post-Reitz interventions, was the authenticity of leaders and a discernible focus on sense-making (Smit, 2013).

In a novel study on South African change leadership experiences, Ambrosio (2017) explores change leadership at the UFS from the perspective of the lived experiences of seven university administrators pivotal to the post-Reitz transformation process. The study reveals, among others, the need for self-awareness and courage in change leadership, as much as it reveals themes of complexity while dealing with simplistic racial binaries and with complicity in the reproduction of racial hierarchies (Ambrosio, 2017).

Critical to my research is Jansen's analysis of the limits of critical theory in making sense of Reitz and designing post-Reitz interventions for change. Traditional perspectives of critical theory and pedagogy, he argues, deny the complexity of lived experience by simply dividing the world between the oppressed and oppressor (Jansen, 2010b, p. 367). It establishes a system of distance that keeps people to their positionalities, dislodging compassion and reproducing a regime of martyr-narratives emerging equally among black and white.

Jansen (2010b, p. 374) draws attention to lived experiences on campus in Reitz and thereafter to argue for relational pedagogies that create dissonance with counter-narratives – the exceptions to the rule that contradict the mythical knowledge of racial identities students hold. When you see beyond the seemingly solid racial categories and recognise the reality of people entangled with one another in an intimate struggle for hope, then apology, forgiveness and reconciliation become possible, a possibility that Taylor (2014a), in her study of the Reitz reconciliation process, shows was not possible for the four Reitz students themselves. Taylor's (2014a) analysis of the reconciliation process reveals a tension between real care for the workers and an inability to accept culpability on the part of the Reitz perpetrators.

The post-Reitz process for reconciliation was a process for *relational transformation*, which the students seemed unable to achieve, while the workers offered forgiveness in recognition of deep humanity (Taylor, 2014a, p. 6), the students continued to draw on troubled, received knowledge, even in their apology to the workers. The primary focus of the post-Reitz interventions was on the entrenched campus residence cultures, which were indicated by the Soudien and other reports as the primary site of racial distance needing change.

However, not much research focuses on these interventions as yet, except for a study by Elliker, Coetzee and Kotze (2013) that explores *discursive strategies* of students regarding their experience of the post-Reitz transformation programme of the university. Their analysis reveals four discourses regarding change among students in residences, namely that change will not happen unless forced by the university; that the university is taking a new direction for change that change cannot be forced and should be left to individuals' processes; and that the university focuses too much on racial integration (2013, p. 25).

In a similar approach of reading narrative data, Bryson (2014) and Walker and Loots (2016) study one particular post-Reitz intervention, namely a student leadership-development programme, the First-Year Leadership for Change programme. The programme sent selected groups of first-year students for a brief study-abroad experience that focuses on diversity and change leadership. The programme used *experiential pedagogies* to make the unfamiliar familiar, grow students' confidence to lead change, build shared values with open dialogue and also used teaching skills to turn ethical concerns into practical action – an intervention for citizen capabilities and civic action (Walker & Loots, 2016, p. 65).

Further post-Reitz studies discuss the impact of the interventions and argue for shifts in interventions for change on campus, such as by Suransky and Van der Merwe (2014), and Keet and Nel (2016). Suransky and Van der Merwe explore student experience of change and highlight the need for a shift from intergenerational to *intra-generational projects* to make sense of Reitz and race, to design and develop performances and practices of to build cross-racial solidarities (2014, p. 19). Keet and Nel (2016, p. 131) explore the development of student citizen agency and reveal an experience among student leaders of "misrecognition" and "playing the system" through alternating performances of compliance or resistance. They argue for a *rethinking of the transformation* initiatives of student and residence life, which have become overly focused on policy-driven consensus, a new governmentality to achieve change (2016, p. 135).

These studies represent a transition from the post-Reitz environment to next cycles of change in campus life at the university. They reveal a full circle reached by the post-Reitz interventions – the post-Reitz world established by the post-Reitz interventions for reconciliation and change now has become the next site for further interventions of institutional transformation.

What we see in the literature on Reitz and its aftermath is a progression in scholarship from research on the intersects of categories of injustice, such as race, gender and class, observable in the incident, through research dealing with the Reitz reconciliation process to research reflecting on the modalities of post-Reitz interventions for change.

However, we see another layer of progression with regard to research data, where the voices and biographies of students emerge only in the most recent studies and primary data for analysis. These do not exclusively focus on Reitz, but also on the continued experiences of and attitudes regarding racial discrimination (Conradie & Brokensha, 2014). The initial studies of Reitz focused on distanced data, such as media reports, court proceedings and other texts, while later studies worked with qualitative interview data. The distinction is critical as it relates to the richness and authenticity of analysis of Reitz.

The studies by Elliker, Coetzee and Kotze (2013), Bryson (2014), Walker and Loots (2016), Van der Merwe and Van Reenen (2016) and Keet en Nel (2016) all make use of interview data gathered during the five years of post-Reitz interventions following Reitz – these studies represent a new direction in the literature with its focus on 'the voice of the students'. Jansen's book (2016) on Reitz and post-Reitz interventions is a seminal work in this regard, as it includes data from untraditional sources, such as the written notes of one of the four Reitz-students and an analysis of letters to the editor published in the local Afrikaans newspaper, *Volksblad*.

The literature on Reitz is silent on the lived experience of student leaders during the turbulent times of change prior to, during and following the incident. While the studies with deeper analyses of Reitz offer indications of students' experiences of the post-Reitz process of change, no studies deal with students' narratives regarding Reitz. This leaves a major gap in the literature regarding student experiences during Reitz and the post-Reitz interventions – the literature does not work with the biographies of students engaged in the process of reconciliation.

I want to contribute to the body of research regarding Reitz firstly in this regard, namely by co-authoring the biographies of their struggle with race of four student leaders who lived through Reitz and thereafter became leaders for reconciliation and change on campus. In addition, apart from Jansen's (2016) in-depth analysis of nearness as strategy to lead change, the literature on Reitz does not provide further analysis or theorising of the actual experiences of change among student leaders during the post-Reitz interventions. How did it come about that reconciliation and racial integration were possible in residences caught in strict system of racial identities? How did leaders on campus shift from naiveté to agency? How did the change initiatives galvanise change leadership, which were considered counter-cultural in a post-Reitz world?

These questions remain largely unanswered, and so set the scene for a possible contribution of this study to scholarship on Reitz and change on divided campuses. As I will argue in my research design (Chapter 3) for the study, I aim to contribute to scholarship on Reitz by co-writing and exploring the life biographies of student leaders for new perspectives on racial knowledge, identity and change. In so doing I also aim to contribute relevant perspectives to scholarship on diversity and change at university campuses, which generally form part of the broad field of student engagement scholarship.

2.2 Student engagement literature

Student engagement in the literature generally refers to the collaborative projects of institutions and students to achieve active learning and meaningful student experiences on campus (Coates, 2007; Krause & Coates, 2008; Kuh, 2009; Kuh *et al*., 2007; Trowler, 2010). Research on student engagement largely focuses on individual student learning, on issues of structure and process and on issues of identity (Trowler, 2010). Studies that focus on individual learning deal with issues of student attention, interests, involvement, active participation and student centeredness in learning.

Studies that focus on structure and process deal with questions on student representation, governance, consultation and feedback, while studies dealing with identity engage concerns of student belonging, group identity and representation, as well as the student experience of 'non-traditional' student communities (Bass, 2012; Tinto, 1997, 1998; Trowler, 2010, p. 11).

The features of international and South African student engagement literature relevant to my research include its emphasis on individual student learning, different foci in studying black and white student experiences, and how the literature deals with research on lived experience of campus change, most notably with studies on the student voice and student movements. The international literature on student engagement focuses largely on individual students and describes this in relation to learning and student success. It is about engagement in the classroom and the various ways to approach interaction between students, role-players on campus, pedagogies and curriculum for impactful learning. The focus remains on success in the classroom, with much less scholarship dealing with engagement of the 'independent' student voice outside the classroom, such as students' roles in institutional governance (Coates, 2007, p. 133). South African studies on student engagement only recently began to deal with individual student success, since post-apartheid transformation of higher education focused largely on student access. Student centeredness, students' cultural capital and the constructions of students held by campus leaders emerge as themes in current South African literature (Blackie, Case & Jawitz, 2010; Fataar, 2012; Higham, 2012; Schreiber, 2013). Student engagement outside the classroom increasingly receives attention in the South African research, such as studies on student representation, residence life and diversity interventions (De Klerk, 2013; Dunn, 2013; Luescher-Mamashela, 2013; Van Zyl *et al*., 2015). There is much less research reflecting on students and racial reconciliation on campus.

As a second important feature in the international student engagement literature is the different foci when studying diverse student experience. Much more research deals with the traditional white student experience than the experience of 'non-traditional' cohorts of students, such as for students of colour, Asian American and LGBT-students (Lowe, Okubo & Reilly, 2012; McClellan, 2012; Renn, 2007) This trend also holds with the available research on the lived experience of student leaders, with black student leaders only recently gaining a distinctive focus in the literature (Boylorn, 2011a, 2011b; Esposito, 2011; Haddix, 2012). A third feature of student engagement scholarship relevant to this study deals the lived realities of students and higher education change. As a concept, 'student voice' defines students' individual and collective views and action as representatives, as social justice allies and change agents in classroom practice and campus transformation and as co-authors of students' development as future leaders (Aymoldanovna *et al*., 2015; Brandt, 2016; Bridges & Mather, 2015; Groves, 2013; Suitt, 2016; Warwick, 2016).

The international literature largely considers higher education change as it relates to teaching and learning and student success in the classroom, and most prominently focus on the theme of student voice in this regard. Studies on the student voice in international literature mainly focus on student participation in teaching, learning and research, but also on themes of institutional power and student representation (Fielding, 2004a, 2004b; Pearce & Wood, 2016; Yannuzzi & Martin, 2014).

The South African literature on student voice follows similar trends and the focus is on student voice in academic engagement and student representation in school governance (Mncube, 2008). However, a unique aspect of South African literature on student voice is the combined focus on youth and student perspectives. Various studies take student perspectives and aspirations as reflective of the broader voice of South African youth and vice versa, when exploring youth perspectives on social change, racial integration and political agency (Arnot & Swartz, 2012; Fleetwood, 2012; Malila, 2014; Steyn, Badenhorst & Kamper, 2010).

The South African literature also foregrounds student movements in student engagement scholarship. Recent and ongoing campus protest movements at South African campuses currently provide a new impetus to scholarship on student movements in African and post-conflict contexts. Wide-ranging student protests since 2015 have drawn attention to institutional transformation, the need for a decolonised curriculum, and the question of tuition fees. This has served to emphasise the critical role of the student movement in higher education transformation, with recent scholarship focusing on various aspects and the implications of the protests (Naidoo, 2015; Luckett & Mzobe, 2016; Luescher, 2016; Luescher, Loader and Mugume, 2016; Bosch, 2016).

The international scholarship on student movements is considered as separate from student engagement, and the focus on students' collective social and political agency contributes to our understanding of the leadership role of students as actors in societal shifts and campus change (Barnhardt, 2014; Davis III, 2015; Grugel & Singh, 2015; Klemenčič, 2014, 2015; Perry, 2013). As such, student movement scholarship counters the established focus on individual student success associated with student engagement literature, which positions the university, not its students, as the primary actor in campus life.

The most recent international scholarship focuses on African contexts and deals with the direct influence of national political parties on student and youth movements and the unique

dynamics of post-conflict societies (Klemenčič, Luescher & Mugume, 2016; Macharia, 2015; Mutisi, 2012; Tsuma, 2012).

This study on the racial knowledge and identies of student leaders engaged in reconciliation responds to the three features of student engagement literature I outline above. Its deep analysis of the four student leaders' racial knowledge in- and outside the classroom broadens the focus of current scholarship on individual learning and student academic success to include institutional knowledge and informal curriculum.

The research engages the individual study participants as exemplars of a larger group of student leaders and reads and reflects on the experiences of black and white students together. It defines and positions the student voices as co-authors of campus change and foreground the lived experiences of the leaders of the student movement.

However, its most important potential contribution emerges in relation to current literature on student leadership. It is here that the potential original contribution of the study emerges.

2.3 Student leadership literature

The most prominent features in the current literature on student leadership relevant to my study are its focus on the impact of student attitudes and identities on their orientation to and agency for leadership, and models of student leadership development.

Research on student leadership explores the role of attitudes and personalities in students' orientation to leadership and citizenship (Betts, Morgan & Castiglia, 2008; Miller, Connolly & Racy, 2015; Weber & Dennison, 2014). Student social identities emerge as a central concern in this regard, although similarly to student engagement literature, studies on leadership identities focus largely on individual students and student leaders (Cakal *et al*., 2011; Day *et al*., 2009). Several studies reveal student attitudes prior to and following leadership development interventions, finding, amongst others, that preconceived notions of leadership characteristics; attaining leadership positions; traditional political engagement and personal involvement; socio-economic status and racial-ethnic background; all directly impact student leadership agency (Caza & Ross, 2014; Fischer *et al*., 2015; Wu & Bao, 2013; Zekan, Peronja & Russo, 2012).

The literature shows that leadership agency requires collective esteem and the capacity to take a social perspective, while campus climates also play a critical role in student leadership development (Broadhurst & Martin, 2014; Dugan, Kodama & Gebhardt, 2012; Soria, Snyder & Reinhard, 2015).

Social perspective taking refers to a student's ability to consider another point of view and correctly infer the thinking and feelings of others in order to empathise with others, while still maintaining their own individuality (Dugan *et al*., 2014; Johnson, Johnson & Dugan, 2015). Collective racial esteem refers to students' self-concept in relation to racial group membership and reveals the impact of racial identity in student leadership development.

An important theme in student leadership identities is the role of identity-based student organisations. Student societies create in-groups on campus that offer safe spaces for engagement and mediate 'social energy' for action (Lewis, 2012). The international literature show that these organisations offer belonging, building confidence for leadership, especially for minority students, such as black students at traditionally white campuses, religious students through faith-based organisations and female students in gender-based sororities (Graham, 2015; Johnson, Johnson & Dugan, 2015; Park, 2012a; Park, 2012b). Furthermore, scholarship on leadership values introduces the notion of moral identity and leadership for the greater good as critical aspects of student leadership identities. Shared values that build shared identities are crucial aspects of leadership development among diverse students (Cohen *et al*., 2013; Guthrie, Jones & Osteen, 2013; Schwartz, 2015; Soria, Snyder & Reinhard, 2015).

The leadership practices of student leaders also reveal their leadership attitudes and identities, with several studies finding that students' leadership practices differ most by gender and ethnicity (Dugan & Komives, 2010; Chang, 2014; Posner, Crawford & Denniston-Stewart, 2015). The Student Leadership Practices Inventory (S-LPI) distinguishes practices that focus on setting a personal example, offering a compelling image of the future, seeking out challenging opportunities, developing cooperative relationships and praising people (Kouzes & Posner, 2014; Weber & Dennison 2014). Although studies on leadership practices describe the lived experience of student leaders, current scholarship on student leadership and race focus separately on black or white student leaders, with the white student experience dominating the field in the international literature. Research on white student leaders and change tend to focus on racial attitudes and particular sites of experience, such as fraternity and sorority organisations (Porter, 2012; Smith, Senter & Strachan, 2013).

Recent studies on black student leaders' experience focus on describing the lived experience of black female and male student leaders at traditionally white universities in the USA (Domingue, 2015; Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015). Studies that combine white and black student experience mostly explore student talk and dialogue to reflect on race in the classroom with few, if any, studies engaging shared identities in addition to or beyond race (Epstein & Lipschultz, 2012).

The South African literature offers a unique contribution with its focus on students' lived experience of campus change in research on race and higher education transformation, often employing life histories as research approach (Ndimande & Neville, 2015; Norgaard, 2015; Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2014; Teeger, 2015; Vieyra, 2015). However, South African scholarship is largely silent on the lived experiences of student leaders, except for selected studies that have recently engaged with experiences of student leadership development (Walker & Loots, 2016). This lack of research on the lived experience of student leaders in particular in higher education transformation also reflects a dearth of research on the lived experience of university leaders and administrators as they lead transformation at South African campuses (Ambrosio, 2017).

International research on student leadership development places its focus on the development of individual traits and skills. Different student leadership models understand leadership as identities and capabilities that can be acquired through formal programmes and actual experience in leadership positions (Dugan & Komives, 2007, 2010).

Current models of leadership development include the social change, servant, relational and identity development models of leadership as the most prominent programmes engaged on campuses, with the social change model (SCM) recognised as the most widely used (Haber & Komives, 2009; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006; Komives *et al*., 2011). The Socially Responsible Leadership Scale of the SCM surveys students' leadership orientation based on the values involved, which include consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy (with civility), citizenship and change (Dugan, Komives & Segar, 2008; Nickels, Rowland & Fadase, 2013). Other factors that play a role in student leadership development include motivation to lead, self-efficacy of student leaders, student beliefs about leadership and particular programme designs (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Martinez, 2015; Thompson, 2016).

The factors that determine the impact and success of leadership development programmes both in curricular and co-curricular contexts are widely studied themes in the literature (Fischer *et al*., 2015; Guthrie, Jones & Osteen, 2013; Sikka & Agnihotri, 2013). So, for instance, Smith (2009) shows that 'encounters', rather than courses have the most impact in student leadership development, especially regarding diversity.

Scholarship that engages with student leadership in South Africa focuses largely on the politics of student activism and formal student representation – student governance in South African higher education follows on student activism as part of the anti-apartheid struggle. The literature is limited when it comes to student leaders' personal experiences and identities as distinct from generalised student or youth experience and identities, as well as on leadership development programmes (Soudien, 2008; Spencer, 2009; Speckman, 2015; Steyn, 2012; Swartz, Harding & De Lannoy, 2012; Taylor, 2014b). The few studies that do focus student leaders' individual identities and experiences follow a random selection of themes, such as Pretorius' (2007) study on student leader's emotional intelligence and Luescher-Mamashela's, and with Mugume (2009, 2014) studies on student governance. Jansen's recent scholarship on race and reconciliation at South African campuses is an exception to the trend. His work specifically engages the lived experiences of student leaders' personal transformation and change leadership (Jansen, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011, 2012). In the case of selected studies that deal with student leadership development programmes, such as Walker's (2015) interviews with students participating in a specialist programme of this kind, the results of studies that focus on student leaders are reported as findings for students in general. Literature on school or campus leadership also is silent on or only references student leaders in analyses of leadership for change.[11]

Reitz offers a major opportunity to deepen scholarship on student leadership, but as I show in the review of Reitz literature, this direction has not as yet been widely explored.

This potential is most evident in the report of the ministerial commission on higher education transformation appointed following the Reitz incident (Soudien *et al*., 2008). While not focusing on student leaders exclusively, the report details the perspectives of student leaders as institutional partners in campus transformation and recommends interventions dealing specifically with student leaders (Soudien *et al*., 2008, p. 55).

[11] See Jansen, 2006, 2007a, 2009a; Lumby & Heystek, 2011; Van der Mescht, 2004; Vandeyar, 2008; Vandeyar & Jansen, 2008; Vandeyar, 2013.

The report replicates the established approach in international literature to consider issues of race from the broader framework of diversity and inclusivity (Soudien *et al*., 2008). As a response to Reitz and post-apartheid indicators of transformation, the report deals largely with racial discrimination as particular focus to illuminate institutional progress with increased diversity and inclusion on campuses.

This study on the racial knowledge and identies of student leaders engaged in reconciliation continues with the prominent themes of student leadership identities and development, but in very specific ways. It considers the racial identities of the four student leaders as their knowledge and sense of self as leaders change over time. The research reveals that their identities as leaders are not static or the result of singular programmes or engagements, but follow a messy process of drawing nearer to or away from change leadership – a finding that offers potential contributions to scholarship on student leadership identities, as much as to how current approaches to student leadership development could work.

A second potential contribution to the current scholarship on student leadership relates to the lived experience of diverse student leaders. The study offers a detailed description of the lived experiences of student leaders engaged in campus change, not as receivers of change, but co-authors of the process. It also reads the lives of black and white students together, reflecting both on the divergences and the convergences between lives.

However, the potential contribution to current scholarship on student engagement and student leadership also depends on the conceptual approaches to student diversity relevant to my research, as well as on what current scholarship already revealed about students' racial attitudes, racial lifeworlds and alternative racial identities.

2.4 Conceptual approaches to study student diversity

Though social struggles in different contexts may focus on different categories of diversity for various reasons, it is the salience of identity as site of struggle across contexts that enables and enacts diversity as framework in education (Seekings, 2008; Smith, 2015). However, over time, the focus on diversity research and practice has shifted to also engage campus diversity climates, curriculum and pedagogy and campus administrative domains, reflecting a shift from diversity defined by different groups to diversity defined as social reality central to institutional success (Smith, 2015).

Studies on diversity investigate political power struggles, democratisation, the cultural survival of unique identities and the historical legacies of injustice (Quaynor, 2012; Smith, 2015). The research deals with the importance of national and historical contexts and on globalisation and societal demographic shifts. It also deals with increasing financial pressures in higher education, on differentiated diversities and identities, on institutional barriers to diversity, transformation and levers for change.[12]

2.4.1 Three trends

Studies in diversity make up a broad field that uses different conceptual approaches to study student diversity and race. Each approach argues differently for the reality of race and racial hierarchies and develops theories of change and research methodologies accordingly. As different theoretical frameworks each approach determines a focus for research on students, race and campus change, as much as it determines the particular pedagogies and practices of change and change leadership undertaken at higher education institutions. They define the unique ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of any given theory and practice of change. To make sense of the broad field of different approaches I begin my review by noting different trends of conceptual approaches emerging over time in the literature, and then focusing my discussion on those theories most relevant to my study.

The most prominent approaches in current scholarship on diversity and race include diversity studies, contact theory, multiculturalism, theories of racial formation and systemic racism, whiteness studies and critical race, postcolonial and feminist theories[13]. Discourse theory, ignorance studies (agnotology), cosmopolitanism and capability theory also gained prominence as conceptual frameworks to study race[14].

I noted three discernible *trends* in the historically development of these frameworks, which I categorised as trends dealing with 'contact', 'culture' and 'hierarchy'. I considered diversity studies, intergroup contact theory, discourse analysis and theories of racial conceptualisation together as a first trend that deals with contact between diverse social (racial) groups.

[12] See Elliott *et al*., 2013; Harper & Antonio, 2008; Parker, 2004; Smith, 2014.
[13] See Applebaum, 2008, 2010; Becker & Aiello, 2013; Bhambra, 2011; Dennis, 2013; DiAngelo, 2012; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014; Feagin & Elias, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 2009; Matias, 2013; Nafafe, 2012; Nash, 2008; Thomas, 2014; Young, 2011.
[14] See Fine, 2011; Garcia *et al*., 2012; Go, 2012; Hikido & Murray, 2015; Malewski & Jaramillo, 2011; Nussbaum, 2011; Peterson, 2012; Reed & Chowkwanyun, 2012; Ropers-Huilman, Winters & Enke, 2013; Walker, 2015; Warnier, 2013.

I grouped frameworks that deal with social and political cultures of and among different groups as a second trend, including multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, capabilities theory and postcolonial studies. As a third trend I considered critical race theory, intersectionality, whiteness studies and agnotology as a group of approaches that deals with social hierarchies and the positionalities of groups therein.

2.4.2 Frameworks relevant to the study

The conceptual frameworks most relevant to this study are intergroup contact theory, post-colonial studies, critical race theory and ignorance studies.

As an answer to group conflicts, *intergroup contact theory*, introduced by Allport (1979) in 1954, remains the most prominent framework in the literature on students, diversity and race, even with its rapid theoretical and conceptual development (Harwood, 2016; Pettigrew *et al*., 2011). Contact theory employs different types of interracial contact as research categories to measure the nature and frequency of students' cross-racial interactions (Bowman & Park, 2014). These include 'neutral' cross-racial contact that measures frequency of interaction with diverse others, 'positive' cross-racial contact that measures potentially meaningful contact, 'negative' cross-racial contact that measures hostility and 'interracial friendship' that measures the racial composition of friendship groups.

In addition to these types of direct contact between groups, indirect types of contact are defined as extended, vicarious, imagined or virtual (Dovidio, Eller & Hewstone, 2011; Pagotto *et al*., 2013). The availability and proximity of diverse others, as well as individual preference for sameness and sociality in contact determine interracial contact (Bowman & Park, 2014). Availability and proximity are measured by reviewing the structural racial diversity of the student body and relative representation of diverse groups, while preferences for sameness and sociality are measured against pre-college attitudes and experiences (Al Ramiah *et al*., 2013; Bowman & Park, 2014). For instance, when students arrive on campus with positive attitudes regarding diversity, programmes focused on interracial contact have less impact (Adesokan *et al*., 2011). Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) have found that reduced anxiety and increased empathy emerge in contact scholarship as the strongest mediators of contact that reduces prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). These factors refine Allport's (1979) original definition of optimal conditions for contact, namely equal group status, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support (Pettigrew, 1998).

Due to its emphasis on individual attitudes as cornerstone of prejudice and intergroup change, contact theory often is questioned for its inability to bring adversaries together following group conflict; to achieve reconciliation following peace – a concern reflected also in the South African literature. Contact theorists respond to this concern by highlighting intergroup friendship as a mediating factor and as requirement for positive contact and reduced intergroup prejudice (Al Ramiah *et al*., 2013; Rodriguez-Perez *et al*., 2011). Intergroup friendship requires self-disclosure, enhanced knowledge of out-groups, perspective-taking, increased empathy among groups and trust building in relationships, even though some studies indicate that interracial friendship does not always decrease stereotyping (Davies *et al*., 2011; Fozdar, 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008; Pettigrew *et al*., 2011; Turner & Feddes, 2011).

As change strategy, intergroup contact engages identity structures and social norms that focus on shared identities of diverse groups, such as common humanity as an intergroup identity (Ata, Bastian & Lusher, 2009; Mangharam, 2013; Morton & Postmes, 2011). As identities are re-categorised and superordinate identities established between groups, in-group anxieties decrease and out-group attitudes turn positive (Gaunt, 2009; Guerra *et al*., 2010; Riek *et al*., 2010).

Several studies argue for the role of intergroup contact to achieve reconciliation, for example extending the reconciling attitudes of apology and forgiveness from only some members to the in-group as a whole; from only some particular to diverse other situations; and from selected to diverse secondary out-groups (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Arthur, 2010; Halabi, Nadler & Dovidio, 2013; Tausch *et al*., 2010).

South African literature on intergroup contact focuses almost exclusively on race relations in historical context prior to, during and in post-apartheid society (Durheim *et al*., 2011; Durheim, Mtose & Brown, 2011; Gibson & Claassen, 2010; Pettigrew, 2010). Gibson and Claassen (2010), for instance, show that greater racial contact among South Africans does not correlate with more reconciliation, with blacks becoming less reconciled with whites following the transitions to democracy.

However, the South African literature contributes to scholarship on intergroup contact on two themes, namely on the mediating role of meta-stereotypes and on self-segregation in intergroup contact (Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Finchilescu 2010; Pettigrew, 2010).

Metastereotypes are the negative perceptions an in-group assumes that an out-group holds of that in-group, which determine the in-group's response to that out-group in similar ways that stereotype threat determines an individual response to perceived negative attitudes (Finchilescu, 2010; Steele, 2010; Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2010).

South African studies on patterns of student conduct in campus situations of interracial contact also refine the notion of self-segregation as a particular response to and mediating factor in intergroup contact. Replicating Tatum's (1999) study of student seating patterns in high school cafeterias in the USA, several South African studies explore informal segregation in seating patterns on campus. These studies show that while interracial contact increased among students at former white campuses due to increasingly desegregated student bodies, self-segregation continued in seating patterns in residence, dining and lecture halls (Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Koen & Durrheim, 2010; Schrieff *et al*., 2010; Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2007).

Contact theory plays a prominent role in student engagement for change in several respects, namely with regard to student prejudice reduction, transformative curriculum and pedagogy and institutional change (Paluck and Green, 2009). Studies on curriculum for change, among others, focus on equity pedagogies, multicultural programming, intercultural competence, unlearning white privilege, social justice activities and racial literary and dialogue.[15]

Studies on co-curricular student engagement, among others, focus on cross-ethnic friendship and diversity experiences, racial socialisation, social spaces and integration, leadership and community involvement, sense of belonging and study abroad emersion.[16] Studies on change and students' racial knowledge focus on dialogic spaces, post-conflict pedagogies and strategic empathy and emotion (Jansen, 2010b; Lewis & Steinmo, 2012; Zembylas, 2012c, 2013b, 2013c, 2015). Studies on institutional change focus increasingly on multidimensional and intersecting positionalities in social and political hierarchies, and change leadership that engages with institutional hierarchies and power and hierarchies are important themes.[17]

[15] See Aldana *et al*., 2012; Boatright-Horowitz, Marriccini & Harps-Logan, 2012; Clem, 2005; Cole & Zhou, 2014; Perry & Southwell, 2011; Rodenberg & Boisen, 2013; Sue, 2013; Tatum, 2007.
[16] See Bowman & Brandenberger, 2012; Bynum, Burton & Best, 2007; Chang, Astin & Kim, 2004; Conradie & Brokensha, 2014; Haber & Komives, 2009; Lowe *et al*., 2013; Paola & Lemmer, 2013; Porter, 2012; Williams, 2012.
[17] See Acevedo & others, 2015; Chang, 2007; Coleman, 2012; De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013; Gunter, 2010; Hallinger, 2014; Hill & Magolda, 2008; Hotho, 2013; Kezar, Carducci & Contreras-McGavin, 2006; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Lumby & Heystek, 2011; Martin & Desmond, 2009; Parker & Villalpando, 2007; Smith, 2014.

Jansen's (2005, 2006, 2007a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2016) work on change leadership in South African higher education reveals the critical role of authentic leadership in higher education change.

Postcolonial theory foregrounds the experience of the subaltern voice in knowledge production and identity – the epistemologies at the margins of colonial knowledge empires (Bhambra, 2011; Giroux, 1992; Spivak, 1988; Tikly, 1999). The theory shows how colonial discourses construct hierarchies; deconstructs the notion of the centre and margins of knowledge, which tales the center as the original true form and the margin as the fragile copy of the true form; and provides a methodology to interrupt colonial master narratives (Giroux, 1992). The theory disrupts the notion of pure cultures or traditions and considers identity as a state of continuous transitions – it rejects a linear perspective of history and identity (Kalua, 2014). The approach developed projects to theorise a non-coercive relationship with the 'other' in colonial thinking and to move out of the cultural inequalities of the colonial encounter (Andreotti, 2011).

These deconstruct colonial dominance and problematise the relationship between the colonial and postcolonial. Postcolonial cosmopolitanism offers a decolonising project to transform exploitive cultures and curriculum (Bozalek, 2011). Postcolonial hybridity engages the ambiguities of culture identity between colonial and postcolonial voices (Bhabha, 1994; Go, 2012; Kalua, 2014; Young, 2003).

The theory introduces the notion of fluidity to our understanding of culture, politics and identity, which reveal the struggles and the freedoms of ambiguity in situations of contact (Nafafe, 2012; Richmond, 2012). Postcolonial hybridity foregrounds the in-betweenness of postcolonial culture and identity and considers the positionalities of people as transitional identities (Ghosh-Schellhorn, 1999). Hybridity and liminality together become a third space and preferred positionality that redesigns meaning beyond the hierarchical limits of the colonial centre and its copied margin. It is an alterity and liminality also to redesign subjectivity, pedagogy and curriculum in education (Bhabha, 2009; Irving & Young, 2004; Kalua, 2009; Rollock, 2012a; Szkudlarek, 2010). The competing projects of postcolonial studies to decolonise culture and identity or lay claim to hybridity as potential space emerge strongly in the South African literature on student identities.

An established scholarship on new identities among young South Africans highlights the ambiguities of racial and ethnic identities following racial intergroup contact in communities, at schools and on campuses. Unconventional and new or ambiguous black identity constructions, such as, among others, 'Model C'-, 'coconut'- or 'kasi'-identities [18], increasingly emerge as prominent themes in South African student and youth identity literature.[19] The notion of identity ambiguities also increasingly emerges in the international literature in education, which for the most part focuses on alternative perspectives on pedagogy, curriculum and research that highlight solidarities against dominant discourses and traditions of being and thinking.[20]

Critical race theory (CRT) rejects the notion of incremental shifts in racial prejudice and problematizes typical approaches, such as colour-blindness (Bornstein *et al*., 2012; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). It investigates race, racism and power, and has revolutionised research frameworks on race in education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Khalifa, Dunbar & Douglas, 2013; Matias *et al*., 2014). Resonating systemic racism's claim that society is fundamentally racially stratified and geared to disenfranchise the oppressed, CRT exposes and challenges racial hierarchies (Closson, 2010; Hylton, 2010).

The theory exposes white elite interests, centres the black voice and uses counter-storytelling to disrupt dominant narratives.[21]

The approach has seen rapid development, transitioning from law to other disciplines. In education, CRT explores decolonised curriculum, black lived experience, racial campus climates and micro-aggressions, redesigned classroom practice, pedagogies for social justice, and educational leadership.[22] New directions in CRT include, among others, an emphasis on postcolonial contexts of race, intermediate racial categories, deep whiteness, race traitors, interracial relationships, immigration and intersectionality (Bonilla-Silva, 2015).

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[18] 'Model C' refers to identities associated with former white, privileged schools; 'coconut' refers to black identities with similar preferences as whites; and 'kasi' is short for 'lokasie' (location), the Afrikaans apartheid-term for townships (black informal settlements), refers to identities of young people living in townships.

[19] See Bangeni & Kapp, 2005; Chapman, 2014; Goodman, 2012; Hammett, 2007; Howell & Vincent, 2014; Kalua, 2013; Makalela, 2014; Pattman, 2007; Rudwick, 2008; Salo, 2009; Sanger, 2013; Soudien, 2001; Sutherland, 2013; Swartz, Harding & De Lannoy, 2012; Wale, 2010.

[20] See Bardhan & Zhang, 2016; Francis, 2007; Hakak, 2015; Luckett, 2016; Ní Laoire, 2016; Sengupta, Barlow & Sibley, 2012; Subedi & Daza, 2008.

[21] See Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Espino, 2012; Hylton, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, Jennings & Hughes, 2013; Milner & Howard, 2013.

[22] See Chadderton, 2013; Egbo, 2011; Gillborn, 2006; Jain, 2010; Khalifa, Dunbar & Douglas, 2013; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 2009; McLaughlin, J. & Whatman, 2011; Mueller 2011; Parker & Villalpando, 2007; Pérez Huber & Solorzano, 2015; Ross, 2009; Savas, 2014; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000.

The centring of the black voice in CRT relates to the critical role of feminist theories of intersectionality in anti-racist scholarship (Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2008). Intersectionality as theory argues that social identities mutually constitute, reinforce and naturalise one another, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of oppression and opportunity, i.e. oppression for black woman and privilege for white men (Ackerly & McDermott, 2012; Warner & Shields, 2013).

It defines oppression as the result of unequal power relations that exist in social structures among diverse identities and privilege some identities over others (Warner Tapper, 2013). No group identity or power relationship exists in isolation, so that identities and oppressions are simultaneously and reciprocally present, enabling a compounding oppression of groups and individuals, such as for black woman facing racial and gender bias (Collins, 2015; Tapper, 2013). South African research on race also increasingly reflects intersectionalities between race, gender and class (Burke & Kao, 2013; Hernandez, 2011; Van der Westhuizen, 2016).

However, CRT is not as widely used in South African educational research as in the international literature, with fewer studies employing a specifically CRT perspective. Taken as a multidisciplinary framework, local educational research rather enacts selected tenants of CRT, such as centring the black voice or counter-narratives (Carolissen & Bozalek, 2016; Mhlauli, Salani & Mokotedi, 2015; Walker, 2005a).

Yet, an increasing number of South African studies employ CRT as primary theoretical framework, such as Modiri's (2011) review of CRT in South African legal and social discourse, Maart's (2014) study on the black woman as producer of knowledge and Conradie's (2016) study on safety in race dialogue. Steyn's work on whiteness is a notable exception, which builds toward the notion of a societal contract of ignorance that maintains racial hierarchy and white privilege (Steyn, 2001, 2004, 2012; Steyn & Foster, 2008).

One particular development from CRT relevant to my study is the notion of the 'race traitor'; the white individual who rejects his whiteness and commits 'treasonous acts' to disrupt and destroy white hegemony and therefore cannot draw on the privileges his whiteness implies (Flores & Moon, 2002; Ignatiev & Garvey, 1996; Malan, 1990; Moon & Flores, 2000; Malan, 2006; Preston & Chadderton, 2012; Scott, 2011).

Ignorance studies as an approach to research race and racial knowledge has gained significant ground since its introduction by Mills (1997) and developed into the fully-fledged field of agnotology (Proctor, 2008). This approach focuses on the multifaceted ways that ignorance is produced, sustained and harnessed as a resource, as well as the role that practices of ignorance play in how people work with knowledge (Sullivan & Tuana, 2007; McGoey, 2012). Proctor (2008) distinguishes ignorance as a native state, a selective choice and a strategic project to sustain not knowing in order to achieve particular outcomes. Their situatedness in groups and the systemic nature of ignorance lead individuals to adopt and reproduce practices of knowing and not knowing to protect their sense of innocence in relation to the past and present (Alcoff, 2007; Jansen, 2016; Mills, 1997, Outlaw, 2007).

Epistemologies of ignorance deal with the relationship of knowledge and power, and the knowledge regimes that protect dominance by non-knowledge (Doerr, 2009; Kirsch & Dilley, 2015). A series of enactments of ignorance underpins the strategic project of not knowing, including, among others, blindness, disregard, half-knowledge, illiteracy, innocence and naiveté (Croissant, 2014, p. 5).

Ignorance studies is a more recent development in education scholarship, although race, racial ignorance and pedagogies to engage naiveté among students are well-established themes in the international and South African literatures (Anwaruddin, 2015; Jungkunz & White, 2013; Malewski & Jaramillo, 2011; Nelson, Adams & Salter, 2013; Olson & Gillman, 2013; Warnier, 2013).

The South African literature on epistemologies of ignorance deals in the main with memory and white ignorance about the past, such as studies on white liberal ignorance and the complicities of societal ignorance contracts (Conway, 2016; Knoetze, 2016; Steyn, 2012). Steyn's (2012) study on ignorance as strategic project for black and white South Africans, and Jansen's (2016) study of several cases of white students claiming they did not know they caused offence with directing racist humour at black people reveal the increasing focus on ignorance as political project in education.

Intergroup contact, post-colonial and critical race theories provide the most relevant theoretical background to my study on the racial knowledge and identity of the four student leaders of the study.

However, I approach this research as a phenomenological project and thus followed a grounded methodology in reading and interpreting the data (see Chapter 3, Methodology); I let the voices of the student leaders direct the analysis of interpretation of the data. The approach revealed the established interpretative concepts relevant to the study, as well as the themes of racial performances, racial lifeworlds and alternative racial identities as categories of organise these concepts.

2.5 Student attitudes as racial performance

I combined current literature on student racial attitudes and behaviours as a category of scholarship that responds to my broader review question (see introduction on how students work with racial knowledge and perform racial projects).

The research on student racial attitudes and behaviours focuses largely on diversity as category to measure how students respond to the reality of race (Cokley *et al*., 2010). The vast body of scholarship in this regard distinguishes between the psychological and social modalities, and deals with both individual and group experiences and responses. Particular themes emerge that scrutinise various aspects of race.

Racial stereotypes, prototypes and group entitativity make up a first group of interpretative concepts, alongside racial micro-aggressions as a second theme, student racial attitudes and behaviours as a third and strategies to resist racism as a fourth theme. Stereotypes play both developmental and threatening roles in relation to the identities of students.

Several studies showing the role of stereotypes and meta-stereotypes in how youth identities are constructed and attitudes develop.[23] Racial prototypes determine people's perception of discrimination and its intensity in racially ambiguous situations (Corning & Bucchianeri, 2010; Krumm & Corning, 2008). Entitativity refers to the degree to which groups are perceived to possess unity and coherence, which mediates group stereotyping and prejudice (Newheiser *et al*., 2009). Group unity, coherence and organisation also relate to attitudes of infra-humanisation, which refers to in-group prejudices that consider out-groups less than human (Gaunt, 2009; Rodriguez-Perez *et al*., 2011).

[23] See Gushue *et al*., 2013; Ray *et al*., 2012; Pauker, Ambady & Apfelbaum, 2010; Van Veelen, Otten & Hansen, 2013; Van Zoonen, 2013; Way *et al*., 2013.

Radicalisation is an important recent theme in scholarship on racial in-group identities and indicates the role of recoded racial boundaries and the impact of ideologies and counter-ideologies (Martin, 2010; Wale, 2010; Wilnar, 2011).

Racial micro-aggressions comprise a second major theme in racial performativity on campus, which refers to the everyday discriminations perpetrated by individuals, groups and institutions (Caplan & Ford, 2014). These are practices of micro-assaults, micro-insults and micro-invalidation in the interactions between people and groups, as well reflected in institutional structures and practices, including, among others, favouritism, isolation, invalidation, invisibility, denial of merit and questioned authenticity.[24]

The attitudes and behaviours of students represent responses to race and make up a third major theme in literature. Students' emotional responses to race include being oblivious to race, being empathetic but not accountable for racism and being antiracist (Lewis, 2012; Spanierman, Beard & Todd, 2012). Affirming racial identity is one of the major responses of students when faced with racial incidents or marginalisation on campus, while responses that confront and contain racism, challenge external definitions of race and defend legitimacy also emerge as general responses (Carter, 2007; Kellogg & Liddell, 2012).

The literature also focuses on coping mechanisms, resistance to diversity and practices of othering. Othering is the process of establishing and sustaining individual or group identities by casting and vilifying someone different to your in-group as the 'other', with the racial gaze and racial profiling emerging as key projects in othering (Alegria, 2014; Esposito, 2011; Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007).

Resistance to diversity among students takes the form of denial of history, victim blaming and distancing strategies, such as silence, dissociation and absence (Jones, 2008; Whitt, 2016). Seizing and freezing, the need for closure and buffering are further concepts critical in making sense of sustained prejudice, but also plays an important role as mechanisms to cope with racial trauma[25]. Strategies to resist race and racism provide for a fourth important theme in the literature on racial performances.

[24] See Boyson, 2012; Houshmand, Spanierman & Tafarodi, 2014; Nadal *et al*., 2013; Rollock, 2012; Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue & Constantine, 2007; Sue *et al*., 2007.
[25] See Brondolo *et al*., 2009; Bynum, Burton & Best, 2007; Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; French, S.E., Coleman, B.R. & DiLorenzo, M.L., 2013; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Lee & Ahn, 2013

Group strategies include race caucuses, racial dialogue, counter-languages, interracial friendship, racial allies and anti-racist solidarity, while individual strategies include self-disclosure, empathy, changing cues for affective responses, contextualisation, and perspective taking.[26]

The most prominent theme emerging from the South African literature on student racial attitudes is the reproduction, and often intensification, of past racial biases among a new generation of South Africans – what Jansen calls 'knowledge in the blood', especially for white students.[27] Recent studies are beginning to focus on the attitudes of black students, such as Mensele and others' (2015) study of student attitudes at a rural historically black South African university.

However, the racial performances to reproduce or disrupt race interact with, respond to and reflect the racial dynamics of the social relations and structures of their environments.

2.6 Student environments as racial lifeworlds

I combine current literature on the racial dynamics of the environments students live in and with, as a category of scholarship that responds to my original review question on the role of students' lifeworlds in their struggle with race.

The international and South African literature on student racial experiences reveals the diverse environments that influence the racial knowledge and identities of students – the *sites of performativity* in their racial lifeworlds.

These include family environments, neighbourhood structures, religious organisations, college subcultures, student associations, residence halls, classrooms and even the sports field.[28]

[26] See Alimo, 2012; De Lissovoy & Brown, 2013; Ensari *et al*., 2012; Haddix, 2012; Leonardo & Porter, 2010; Nelson, Dunn & Paradies, 2011; Obear & Martinez, 2013; Philips, 2011; Sritharan & Gawronski, 2010; Sue, 2013; Tropp *et al*., 2012; Vorauer & Sasaki, 2014.
[27] See Franchi & Swart, 2003; Higham, 2012; Jansen, 2007b, 2009a, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016; Johnson, 2006; Keizan & Duncan, 2010; Kgantsi, Fontaine & Temane, 2015; Kotze *et al*., 2015; Kotze & Prevost, 2015; Lefko-Everett, 2012; Leibowitz *et al*., 2007; Le Roux, 2014; Makhanya, 2010; Mattes, 2012; Mokoena, 2014; Soudien, 2008.
[28] See Brunsma, Brown & Placier, 2013; Bumpus & Rodgers, 2009; Carrington, 2013; Coalter, 2013; Hill & Magolda, 2008; Lewis, 2012; Lowe *et al*., 2013; Museus, 2008; Park, 2012a, 2012b; Pilkington, 2013; Porter, 2012; Rivas-Drake & Witherspoon, 2013; Saenz, 2010.

The lived environments of students that feature most prominently in South African studies on race include families, campus residence life, religious organisations, classrooms and sport, specifically – in universities like the University of the Free State – on the intersections between rugby and race.[29]

The coherence and continuation of racial attitudes between families, churches, schools and campuses increasingly illustrate the power of racial lifeworlds in reproducing troubled knowledge (Jansen, 2009a). The lives of the four student leaders also reveal that the cultures of Afrikaans, white schools and campus residences used similar programmes to maintain racial hierarchy, most notably through practices of hazing (De Klerk, 2013).

Religion and spirituality increasingly receive attention in the international literature on students and diversity, especially for its priming role for diversity and religiosity that emphasises conformity and limits interracial friendship (Johnson, Rowatt & LaBouff, 2010, 2012; Hall, Matz & Wood, 2010; Modica, 2012). An important contribution in this regard is the study by Street (2015) on the role of religious organisations in reconciliation at the University of Mississippi, rarely demonstrated any impact and served rather as a proxy for the social distances of established campus cultures. However, Edwards, Christerson and Emerson (2013) show that multicultural congregations succeed with racial integration in large part owing to intentional leadership for and representation of diversity.

The different environments students move and function in together establish *racial climates* as an important factor that affects student racial performances.[30] Harper and Hurtado (2007) describe nine trends in how historically white campuses responded to the demands of diversity, including negligence espoused or enacted by an institution, avoiding debates on racial issues, continued self-segregation and competing satisfaction rates.

The trends also include, racist reputations, lack of shared cultural ownership, overestimations of black satisfaction, a lack of qualitative investigation of lived experiences and fear of speaking out against racism on campus.

[29] See Botha *et al*., 2013; Bozalek, 2010; Dunn, 2012; Clark, 2011; Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Ferreira *et al*., 2012; Fox, 2011; Höglund & Sundberg, 2008; McKinney, 2007a; Mueller, 2011; Punt, 2009; Scheid & Vasko, 2014; Swartz, Arogundade & Davis, 2014; Van Zyl *et al*., 2015.
[30] See Broadhurst & Martin, 2014; Hurtado, Alvarado& Guillermo-Wann, 2015; Nichols, 2009; Pieterse *et al*., 2010; Vaccaro, 2012; Victorino, Nylund-Gibson & Conley, 2013.

Institutional environments determine racial climates with a daunting list of practices: indirect discrimination, employment practices, occupational cultures, staff structures, lack of positive action for diversity, curriculum structures, spatial design, commitment of managers and leaders to diversity, intercultural expertise, training for interracial competence and equality and established styles of consultation, i.e. to engage the student voice (Brunsma, Brown & Placier, 2013; Pilkington, 2013).

The literature also reveals the discourses and social norms that function across the diverse environments that surround students, which function as *narrative plots* for and determine group-based knowledge and identities (Ata, Bastian & Lusher, 2009).

Ignorance, nostalgia and victimhood emerge as the most prominent racial plots of the lifeworlds of students in the international and South African literatures. Ignorance as a political project to sustain racial hierarchies emerges especially in the South African literature as a strategy to maintain privilege or avoid racial trauma from the past and in the present. Whereas ignorance is the selective forgetting of past injustices, nostalgia is the selective remembering of past privileges, also as a measure to avoid trauma. Nostalgia, on the other hand, is increasingly considered a pedagogical site to engage for social justice education.[31]

Victimhood refers to the reading of social and societal contexts as threatening, though black and white groups claim victimhood for different reasons (Baumann, 2013; Cabrera, 2014a, 2014b; Carbado, 1998; King, 2015; Kurtz, 2014; Steyn, 2012). In the South African context, racial victimhood finds expression in language of racial accusation, social alienation and group anger, which continues between different lifeworld sites such as family and church (Jansen, 2004; Sutherland, 2013).

However, the reproduction and continuation of racial binaries and racist narrative plots from home to school to campus are not the only realities that emerge in the literature on student experience and race. Within the established racial rubric, the alternative realities of multiracial students provide for scholarship on alternative knowledge and identities.[32]

[31] See Bains, 2013; Coullie, 2013; Du Preez, 2014; Frankish & Bradbury, 2012; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012; Maly, Dalmage & Michaels, 2013; Matias, 2013; Matias & Allen, 2014; Nelson, Adams & Salter, 2013; Olson & Gillman, 2013; Steyn, 2012; Zembylas, 2011.
[32] See Burke & Kao, 2013; Chang, 2014; Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Gaither, 2015; Masuoka, 2011; Nyoni, 2012; Osei-Kofi, 2012.

2.7 Alternative student identities

I combine current literature on student experiences and identities that does not conform to the traditional racial binaries of black and white as a category of scholarship that responds to my original review question on alternative racial knowledge.

The international literature engages alternative racial experiences of students for the most part with a focus on multi-raciality, which reinforces the racial rubric by exploring the experiences to students that do not conform to essentialist racial positionalities of black or white (Chang, 2014; Gaither, 2015; Masuoka, 2011). Also named as mixed-race, biracial or transracial identities, scholarship on the alternative experiences of these students focus on individual experiences and struggles of belonging, self-identification and the in-group politics that follows their perceived in-betweenness or hybridity.[33]

Multiracial students often are considered race traitors who deny their multiracial background in favour of mono-racial positionality.[34] The role of families is critical in how students respond to multiracial identities, with the passive racial messaging of mothers and micro-aggressions in families shown as mediators of diversity attitudes of multiracial students (Butler-Sweet, 2011; Nadal *et al*., 2013; Norwood, 2013; Rollins & Hunter, 2013).

Several studies explore oppression and struggles of trans-identities with identity intersectionalities of race, gender and sexuality, especially regarding the identity struggles of LGBT-students and transgender youth (Renn, 2007; Singh, 2013).

An interesting development in the international scholarship on multi-identities is research on bi- and pan-ethnicity. Focusing on ethnic culture, bi-ethnicity traces the experiences of ethnic minority groups, while pan-ethnicity refers to the intra-cultural differences and solidarities of subcultures (Gonzales-Backen, 2013; Okamoto & Mora, 2014).

The South African literature on multiracial student experience largely reflects the themes of international scholarship and focuses on the impact of families, self-identification and struggles of belonging of multi- or bi-racial students (Du Toit & Quayle, 2011; Francis, 2006, 2007).

[33] See Anderson, 2015; Bettez, 2010; Blair, 2015; Burke & Kao, 2013; Cheng & Lee, 2009; Renn, 2004.
[34] See Ingrim, Chaudhary & Jones, 2014; Masuoka, 2011; Townsend, Markus & Bergsieker, 2009; Williams, 2013.

South African literature offers unique perspectives in its distinction between black and coloured identity, with coloured identities being 'not white enough, not black enough' (Adhikari, 2005; Nikolaeva, 2013). The literature also contributes to scholarship on alternative identities by highlighting the ambiguities of post-apartheid youth identities – the alternative modes of belonging demanded of young South Africans in a transitional and shifting environment (Bornman, 2010; Swartz, Harding & De Lannoy, 2012). New identities that emerge in post-apartheid schools and campuses include, for example, being a cosmopolitan 'coconut', 'born-free Afrikaner' or being of the 'kwaito-nation'.

Clear-cut notions of racial identity fade and ambiguity mark student identities – the established racial binaries do not fully describe the realities young people live with in post-apartheid South Africa.[35]

The emergence of obscurity and fluidity as factors in identity construction directs scholarship on student identities to an analysis of new solidarities and new compositions that develop in transitional contexts – a move towards in-betweenness as potential space of less defined identities. The tension between the definition of the post-apartheid generation as 'born-free' and the mounting evidence of their continuation of racial identities and distances also lead to novel proposals to define a generation, such as Malila's (2015) proposal to name the post-apartheid generation as 'youngizens'.

Reitz, on the other hand, enacted the established racial hierarchies and binaries that marked students' lifeworlds and revealed the troubled knowledge and identities the Reitz students adopted over time. Only when the post-Reitz interventions for change disrupted established racial norms and practices, were identity ambiguities embraced and the potential space of in-betweenness actualised as resource for change.

2.8 Conclusion

My research explores the lived experiences of student leaders that worked for racial reconciliation on a divided university campus. I sought to know who they are and how they became leaders for change. What shifts took place over time in how did they experience racial knowledge and identity?

[35] See Chapman, 2014; Goodman, 2012; Haug, 2013; Howell & Vincent, 2014; Jansen, 2016; Loubser, 2014; Macmillan & Graham, 2011; Makalela, 2014; Pietila, 2013; Rudwick, 2008; Salo, 209; Soudien, 2001, 2003; Swartz, Harding & De Lannoy, 2012.

This study faces a dearth in literature on students and student leaders, and racial reconciliation on university campuses, which directed my review of current literature to engage more broadly with current scholarship on students engagement, student leadership and student diversity. However, a broader scope meant that in addition to ascertaining silent themes in the research on students, race and campus change, my review of relevant scholarship has required a conceptual structure to organise and synthesise the findings of international and South African literature (see Chapter 3,Methodology).

I developed a methodology to organise the literature and structure my findings based on my observations of different levels of research and distinctive thematic and conceptual categories emerging from current scholarship. The three levels include research on micro, meso- or macro-levels, which intersect with five thematic categories of conceptual approaches to diversity, change interventions and racial performances, racial lifeworlds and alternative experiences.

I have grouped theoretical frameworks together as a thematic category of 'conceptual approaches', and studies on prejudice reduction and campus diversity together as 'change interventions'. Furthermore, I grouped studies of student racial attitudes and behaviours together as 'racial performances' and studies on lived environments together as 'racial lifeworlds'. Finally, I grouped studies on multi-raciality, cosmopolitan identities and identity ambiguities together as 'alternative experiences'. I also distinguished between research findings that describe, critique, appreciate or disrupt our understanding of and the realities of race.

The international and South African literatures on student engagement and leadership generally provide descriptive and appreciative concepts to make sense of student agency and design practices for student leadership development. International scholarship on student leadership focuses almost exclusively on student development programmes for socially responsible leadership. South African literature relevant to student leadership offers descriptive concepts relevant to the performativity and conceptual framing of student governance, with very little engagement on the lived experience of student leaders, although increasingly prioritising this focus. Very few studies engage students as co-drivers of institutional transformation, describe students' change leadership or theorise change from students' perspective.

Furthermore, student agency, which is the strongest concept engaged in scholarship on student leadership, features most prominently in literature on student voice in classroom practice, on campus student governance and on the impact of student movements for change. Current scholarship has not as yet explored student agency in relation to racial reconciliation, except for Jansen's (2016) analysis of post-Reitz student leadership at the University of the Free State. Jansen introduces this focus in scholarship on change leadership in his book on nearness as theory of leading change.

Except for Jansen's work, my review if literature found one other study that directly focus on student agency for reconciliation, namely Street's (2015) study on the role of religious student organisations in campus reconciliation at the University of Mississippi – Street found that the religious organisations she dealt with did not ameliorate reconciliation, but rather reflected the broader cultural dynamics of racial distance at the campus.

I categorised my review of the conceptual approaches used in the current research on students, diversity and race in three discernible *trends*, namely groups of frameworks that deal with 'culture', 'contact' and 'hierarchy'. I considered multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, capabilities theory and postcolonial studies as a first discernible trend dealing with social and political cultures. I grouped diversity studies, intergroup contact theory, discourse analysis and the theories of racial conceptualisation as a second trend that deals with social group contact, and considered critical race theory, intersectionality, whiteness studies and agnotology as a third trend dealing with group positionalities.

I approach this research phenomenologically (see Chapter 3, Methodology) and do not adopt a particular theory of diversity or race for the study. Intergroup contact theory, postcolonial studies, critical race theory and ignorance studies together form a useful theoretical landscape for my analysis and interpretation of the narrative data of the study. I draw on the notion of in- and out-groups of intergroup contact theory, engage with the dynamics of hierarchy and intersectionality of critical race theory and employ the epistemological definition of ignorance in agnotology to describe the lived realities and racial lifeworlds of the four student leaders. However, postcolonial theory provides the most relevant conceptual tools to interpret and theorise my research findings. As my analysis for and discussion of the findings (Chapters 10 & 11) will show, I engage the postcolonial notions of transitions, ambiguities and in-betweenness in my analysis of the life narratives of students; narratives that counter the prevailing hierarchies of racial identity on campus.

My review of literature on Reitz revealed that studies that offer deep analysis of the incident and its aftermath are limited, while a significant number of studies that do not study Reitz as case only reference the event as illustrative of continued racism. The majority of studies also do not reflect the voice and experiences of students during and after Reitz, least of all as participants in the design and rollout of post-Reitz interventions. Recent studies increasingly reflect the lived experience of students (Elliker, Coetzee & Kotze, 2013; Jansen, 2016; Keet & Nel, 2016; Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2014; Walker & Loots, 2016).

This study wants to contribute to the body of research regarding Reitz by co-authoring the biographies of four student leaders who became leaders for reconciliation and change on campus. It offers a very detailed description of how student leaders experienced and made sense of Reitz and post-Reitz interventions, and does so from different racial and gender perspectives – an original contribution to current literature on Reitz.

This research also wants to address important silences in current literature on students, race and campus change. My review of racial performances, racial lifeworlds and alternative experiences revealed that the majority of scholarship on students, race and change focuses on student racial attitudes and responses to diversity. Selected studies on lived environments, such as Tatum's (1997) on seating patterns at cafeterias shifted the focus to racial lifeworlds, but in reality, social aspects of race are not as well established, as is a focus on individual prejudice. Alternative experiences of identity, such as multiraciality and the identity ambiguities of transitional contexts draws the least amount of research internationally, as well as locally, although shifting racial identities increasingly emerge as theme in the South African literature. Racial lifeworlds and alternative experience hold potential for original research.

The international literature on alternative student identities takes multiraciality and trans-identity as the key markers that describe non-traditional student lifeworlds. South African scholarship focuses on 'ambiguity', rather than 'mixing' as a descriptive category for alternative identities. The transitional nature of their lifeworld and identity ambiguities of post-apartheid students may offer new perspectives on race and change. My study aims to continue this line of inquiry and further disrupt racial binaries as the foundational framework for research on student and race.

The literature also is silent on the positionality of student leaders in theories of change. Limited studies explore the agency of student leaders as *authors* of campus change or the voice of student leaders in projects to theorise change – students are framed as recipients of or barriers to change interventions. This focus in my research emerge as the most prominent potential contribution the study may offer, namely to refine scholarship on higher education change by centring and theorising the experiences of student leaders as co-authors of change; of students' intentional contribution as actors and leaders in campus transformation.

In summary, I note five potential contributions that continue and respond to current scholarship on Reitz and higher education change.

A first potential contribution of the study is to foreground the experiences of student leaders prior to, during and after Reitz, as well as to theorise from a grounded perspective what their lives imply for leadership and higher education change.

A second potential contribution of the study in relation to student engagement scholarship is to interrupt the silence on student leadership for change, and the silent voice of student leaders in scholarship on higher education transformation.

The study offers a third potential contribution in relation to theories of race and change by revealing conceptual alternatives to the racial binary that frames scholarship on student leaders, race and change. In doing so the research also refines the notions of postcolonial identity, lifeworlds and performativity of student leaders that counter-intuitively lead change.

The study proposes a possible theory of change as a fourth potential contribution that engages the notion of co-authorship as framework to make sense of the role of student leaders in the research on and practices of campus change, which I develop as a theory of bridge-building (see Chapter 11, Discussion).

Moreover, and most importantly, this study offers a fifth potential and original contribution with its focus on the combined themes of racial reconciliation, student leaders' experiences and sense-making of change leadership and the impact of their racial knowledge and identities on the process – a silent combination of research questions in current scholarship.

The next chapter will outline the research questions and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

I approach this study as a qualitative project in education that aims to describe and interpret the lived experience of student leaders engaged in racial reconciliation at a university campus in South Africa. In this chapter, I want to describe the methodology I used to ensure the validity of my findings and argue for the plausibility of its emergent theoretical perspectives.

Important distinctions in the design of educational research are the different classifications of research as applied or basic, empirical or theoretical, nomothetic or idiographic and interventionist or descriptive (Coe, 2012a). These distinctions between different researches aim to recommend action, or only to build knowledge, focus on phenomena or ideas, make general or case-specific predictions, and aim to change or only describe educational realities. A study is classified according to its ontological, epistemological and methodological paradigms, which determine its methods of inquiry and the validity of its interpretation and transfer claims (Coe, 2012b; Waring, 2012).

This study focuses on applied and empirical inquiry, but in this process describes and interprets the lives of particular students so that grounded perspectives emerge which describe lived experiences and enrich our understanding of educational change with transferable concepts.

I aim to investigate the phenomenon of student leaders that counter-intuitively, in terms of the racial conflict on campus at the time, were leading in order to achieve racial reconciliation. I selected four such student leaders for the investigation. I adopted a phenomenological approach to study the lived experience of each student and used life histories as method to develop the data of the research – the biographies of racial knowledge and identity of the study participants. I ensure the validity of the research with methods that enshrine sensitivity to context, attentiveness in data collection, rigour in analysis, transparency in the research process and internal coherence of the study (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

Based on the problem I want to investigate and the objectives of my study, I locate my research in the field of sociology of education and develop questions and operational definitions suited to a qualitative research approach that studies selected cases illustrative of particular phenomena.

3.1 Research problem and objectives

Campus diversity is a central concern in education discourse, specifically owing to continued incidents of discrimination among students around the world. A large body of scholarship confirms the trend that gender, racial and ethnic discrimination persists, rather than fades, among students at campuses around the world, as is also the case in South African higher education, where students can employ apartheid racial themes in constructing youth identities.

The global nature of continued prejudice is clearly demonstrated in several recent incidents of racial discrimination reported in global and local media in the USA at the Universities of California Davis (2015) and Oklahoma (2015); incidents in the UK at the Universities of London (2015) and Birmingham (2015); and in South Africa at the Universities of Stellenbosch (2014), North-West (2014) and the Free State (2014).

Jansen (2009) defines the problem of sustained patterns of racism as that of intergenerational knowledge – 'knowledge in the blood'. Several studies support the notion of intergenerational (received) knowledge that limits students' capacity for change, mostly by triggering nostalgic memory (Frankish & Bradbury, 2012; Gobodo-Madikizela, 2012; Zembylas, 2014). Others argue for pedagogies that emphasise generational trauma, critical dialogue and nostalgic emotions as ways of disrupting and transforming students' troubled knowledge (Del Carmen Salazar, 2013; Du Preez, 2014; Spear, 2014; Zembylas, 2013).

Interrupting students' received and troubled knowledge is a crucial aspect of the debate for higher education transformation of curriculum, culture and knowledge (Cloete, 2014; Soudien, 2010).) This is especially true for South African higher education as a result of its history of racially based universities (Elliker, Coetzee & Kotze, 2013).

Reitz highlighted continued racism in South African higher education, but also offered possible new perspectives on change at university campuses. Reports that followed the interventions, such as the South African Survey of Student Engagement (2010) and Residence Transformation Reports of the university (2012) showed marked increases in positive racial interaction and student support for institutional transformation at the university.

This revealed the achievements for racial reconciliation among students at the campus, which represented a counter-narrative on institutional transformation and leadership for change at the time.

Institutional change leadership increasingly represents a unique and critical theme in higher education transformation, with recurring incidents of racial discrimination at college and university campuses seen as signals of the failures of higher education generally and higher education leadership in particular (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Lewins, 2010). However, there is a dearth of scholarship on change leadership in higher education (Ambrosio, 2017).

In this study, I want to address the problem of change leadership in the context of continued racial discrimination on campuses by investigating the leadership experiences of students leading change through racial reconciliation at a university in South Africa.

The research objectives of this study are twofold, namely to make sense of continued racial discrimination among students at university campuses; and to explore the experiences of change leadership of students engaged in racial reconciliation, seeking new perspectives relevant to higher education transformation.

3.2 Research questions and operational definitions

I want to make sense of this counter-narrative by exploring student leaders' initiative to lead for reconciliation. I will read the life narratives of the four student leaders for their experiences of race prior to and during post-Reitz campus interventions for change.

Therefore, this study must answer questions regarding the racial knowledge and identity and the shifts in lived experience and sense making of race that enabled the study participants to lead change. I want to explore the notion that, similarly to how young people adopt racist prejudices during their formative years, during their early lives, students from diverse racial backgrounds also establish such knowledge and identities that they lead for reconciliation rather than for conflict, against prejudice rather than for social distance.

My research questions are: How did student leaders' experience of race, racial knowledge and identities change over time? How did their experiences of change on campus transform student leaders' racial knowledge and identities?

In addition, I want to know: How did their experiences of race and change over time influence their leadership for racial reconciliation and change, and what patterns of change in knowledge and identity are noticeable across lives?

For the purposes of this study, I operationalise the concepts ‘race’, ‘knowledge’, ‘identity’ and ‘reconciliation’ as follows:

> I define ‘race’ sociologically as a concept that distinguishes groups of people based on observable racial/ethnic differences, but which is socially and historically constructed through cultural and political discourses and institutions to achieve very real consequences of privilege or oppression.
>
> I define ‘knowledge’ as the hidden and conscious knowledge that people gain, hold and enact in relation to others and their social context, as well as the social, political and cultural regimes of knowledge and ignorance at play in the lived experience of individuals and groups.
>
> I define ‘identity’ holistically as the agency of individuals and of groups to construct a sense of self and others through lived experience and maintain a constellation of, among others, memberships, characteristics, values and attitudes. I use the principles of identity described in identity process theory as backdrop to my reading of the identity struggles of the four student leaders in this study, which include the principles of centrality, hierarchical arrangement and salience of identity components (Breakwell, 2014; Jaspal & Cinnerella, 2012).

In addition, for the purposes of this study, I define ‘reconciliation’ as social, political and cultural processes to resolve conflict and reconstruct relationships between different groups with programmes to heal trauma, reform inequality, correct past justices and build shared aspirations. It involves discourses and programmes of memory, apology, forgiveness and restoration to counter discourses and programmes of ignorance, persecution and confrontation (Hattam, 2012; Hattam, Atkinson & Bishop, 2012).

3.3 Making sense of the literature

The review of relevant literature faced a dearth of literature that deal with the intersects of the primary themes of the study. Very few studies have investigated racial reconciliation among students on campuses in general, while I found no studies that deal specifically with student leaders leading on-campus reconciliation or the experiences of student leaders engaged in reconciliation.

Studies on student experiences in general of campus transformation, interracial contact and reconciliation pedagogies abound, but higher education literature is silent on students' experiences, practices and leadership for racial reconciliation. The trend also continues in scholarship on Reitz. Current literature on Reitz assumes and defines the post-Reitz interventions as a case study in racial reconciliation, with a growing body of work that analyses its meaning for scholarship on campus change leadership, such as Jansen's (2016) analysis of 'nearness' as theory of change and change leadership. However, scholarship on Reitz has failed as yet to combine the three themes of student leaders; identity and knowledge; and racial reconciliation, and so continues the broader silence on student experiences of leading reconciliation on a university campus.

This research required that I design a methodology to determine and make sense of literature relevant to my study and bridge the silence in the literature on the particular focus of this study. To do so I focused my review of literature on higher education scholarship that deals with student engagement, student leadership and student diversity. The instances of overlap between the three fields allow me to position my study in the field of higher education studies, foreground the theoretical approaches and current scholarship that this study continues builds on, and also reveal its potential contributions.

Nevertheless, even when taking this broader perspective to review relevant scholarship, further challenges emerge for composing a disciplinary landscape in relation to which I am able to position this study. The first challenge comes from the different research questions the fields of student engagement, leadership and diversity focus on, which demand a priority distinction between them. Although scholarship on student engagement and leadership engages the theme of race, it is scholarship on student diversity that explores racial attitudes and identities in more detail. In addition, compared to the established scholarship on student diversity, student leadership is a more recent field in higher education research (Dugan, Corinne & Gebhardt, 2012; Dugan, Komives & Segar, 2008). My review, then, must prioritise student diversity above student engagement and student leadership.

Secondly, literature on student diversity for the most part does not distinguish between student leaders and students as research population. The current literature on students' racial experiences by implication considers student leaders a subset of students as the larger research population.

Thirdly, studies on higher education transformation do not yet engage racial reconciliation among students as a particular process of campus change or a distinct focus in the research. The current literature on campus change considers race only insofar as it presents a category of diversity in constructing inclusive campus environments – racial reconciliation among students does not feature as a distinctive project for campus change.

Therefore, as I survey the disciplinary landscape of student engagement, leadership and diversity in my review of the literature, I have no other option but to combine studies on student leaders and students, read studies on reconciliation and change together, and concentrate on student diversity to review scholarship on students and racial knowledge and identities. However, even when defining the scope of the review in this way the combined scholarship on student engagement, student leadership and student diversity continues to represent a vast amount of literature and rich landscape of scholarship.

In order to organise the literature I developed review questions to engage different categories of literature. The review questions were:

- How do scholars conceptually approach and make sense of students' lived realities with race and change in higher education?
- How do students work with racial knowledge and perform projects to reproduce or disrupt racial hierarchies?
- How do the their lifeworlds impact on students' struggle with race?
- What do students experience when they lead for change on campus?
- How does alternative knowledge emerge in students' lived experiences?

3.3.1 Organising the literature

Drawing on established research distinctions and based on emerging trends I observed in the literature, I developed a conceptual structure to organise the combined scholarship on engagement, leadership and diversity, and to structure my review findings.

I distinguished different levels of research and distinctive thematic categories that organise the literature, as well as conceptual categories that summarise the key findings of current scholarship on students, race and campus change.

A review of the literature on students, race and campus change reveals scholarship on micro-, meso- or macro-level (Byng, 2013, p. 709; Saperstein, Penner & Light, 2013, p. 365). Micro-level research focuses mostly on patterns of prejudice and individual racial attitudes. Meso- and macro-level research focuses on institutional analysis and the collective action of groups (Saperstein, Penner & Light, 2013).

The research levels intersect with five thematic categories, including conceptual approaches to diversity, change interventions and racial performances, racial lifeworlds and alternative experiences (see Figure 1 below).

I grouped the theoretical frameworks and conceptual approaches to make sense of race as social phenomenon together as a first thematic category of 'conceptual approaches', and studies on prejudice reduction and campus diversity programmes together as a second thematic category of 'change interventions' (Kezar & Eckel, 2002, p. 436; De Klerk & Radloff, 2010, p. 30; Torres, Jones & Renn, 2009, p. 581).

I grouped studies that deal with how students enact race, as read in scholarship on racial attitudes, identities and behaviours, together as a first thematic category of 'racial performances' (Klein, Spears & Reicher, 2007, p. 3; Butler, 2010, p. 147). Micro-level research, for instance, deals with racial identity, while meso- and macro-level research deals with institutional and inter-group racial performances respectively.

I grouped studies on students' lived environments, as read in scholarship on the sites and narrative plots of students' lived experiences together as a second thematic category of 'racial lifeworlds' (Husserl, 1936/1970, p. 142; Ashworth, 2016, p. 23). Macro-level scholarship reveals the impact of power in shaping social hierarchies, while meso- and macro-level research focuses on institutional environments, "where official policies, racial stereotypes and cultural representations collide with individual racial identities and perceptions" (Saperstein, Penner & Light, 2013, p. 367).

I grouped studies on multi-raciality, cosmopolitan identities and identity ambiguities during societal transitions together as a third thematic category of 'alternative experiences' (Brewer, 2001, p. 121; Hakak, 2015, p. 132; Ní Laoire, 2016, p. 477).

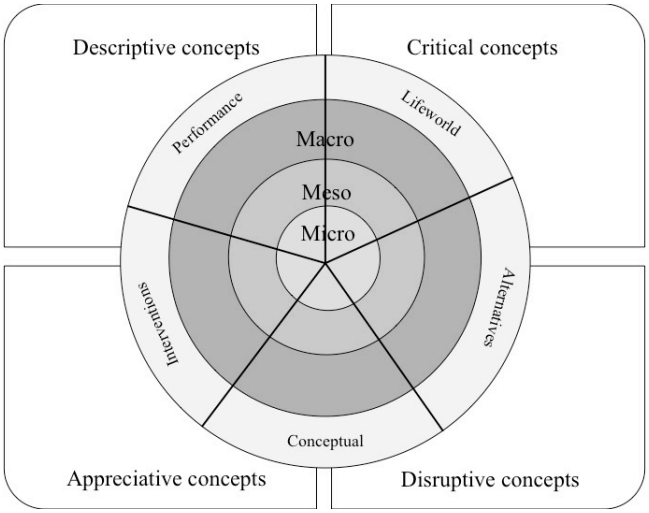


Figure 1: Literature review levels, thematic categories and concept groups

I organised the combined findings from all the thematic categories according to similarities in the discernible contributions they make to our understanding of student experience, race and campus change. Research findings describe, critique, appreciate or disrupt our understanding of the phenomenon of race. I observed *descriptive* concepts that explain how race works, *critical* concepts that reveal its destructive mechanics, *appreciative* concepts that show the constructive role of racial identity and *disruptive* concepts that disrupt the salience of race.

I used the different levels of current literature and the groups of concepts I observed to answer my review questions and report on the conceptual approaches, methodologies and critical finding in current scholarship relevant to the study, and to determine its potential contribution to higher education scholarship.

3.4 Sociology of education

As implied in the objectives of the study and its operational definitions, I position this research broadly as scholarship in the sociology of education, which studies education as an important societal institution that constructs and explains the lived experience of groups and group members (Ballantine & Hammack, 2016).

This field studies educational structures, processes and practices to understand the relationship between educational institutions and society, both at the micro- and macro-levels (Saha, 2008).

Research in the field makes use of three types of theories, namely functionalist theory and theories of conflict or interaction. Functionalist theories focus on analysis of educational systems in the context of broader societal systems (Ballantine & Hammack, 2016).

Theories on conflict focus on the struggles among groups for power and privilege and the hierarchies that determine group positionality and mobility, while interaction theories focus on individual responses and meaning making to their social environments and relationships (Ballantine & Hammack, 2016).

The sociology of education foregrounds the agency of people as actors and as knowers within social hierarchies, their positionality therein, as well as their trajectories within the social structures of their environments over time (Maton, 2014).

I take this social constructionist perspective on knowledge and identity as the approach in this study, as it enables a reading of the complexities of the lived experience and sense making of the study participants in relation to the racial hierarchies of their environments. It reveals the impact of the various sites, agents and social institutions that provide the context of their struggles with race. As a constructivist approach, the sociology of education enables a reading of the life narratives of the students of this study for their embodiment of a struggle with knowledge and identity, their agency as knowers and their becoming actors in knowledge and with identity (Raskin, 2012).

This approach focuses my study on social identities, the social construction of knowledge and the impact of social relations and phenomena on the process of racial reconciliation and change leadership.

3.4 Phenomenology as research methodology

The phenomenological approach to research seeks to understand and interpret the phenomenon of human experiences beyond factual accounts that only describe experiences, defined by the well-known maxim, ‘back to the things themselves’ (Husserl, 1936/1970; Van Manen, 2014). It wants to read phenomena, as they are perceived, to gain a sense of the whole; differentiate description into meaning; reflect on the significance of each unit of meaning; and clarify the overall structure of a phenomenon.

There are two schools of phenomenology, namely descriptive and interpretive.

The objective of descriptive phenomenology is to describe things as they appear, while interpretative phenomenology wants to describe, understand and interpret lived experiences (Tuohy *et al*., 2013). Interpretive phenomenology focuses on 'being-in-the-world' (*dasein*) and the hermeneutics of making sense of life-worlds and the particular aspects of a phenomenon or event (Van Manen, 2014). Interpretative phenomenology as a method of research focuses on how people make sense of major life experiences (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). The method deals with the everyday flow of lived experience and the significance it holds for people.

As a research paradigm, interpretative phenomenology consists of two theoretical axes, namely to *describe* lived experience, how the study participant makes sense of his experience and then to *interpret* the descriptions of the events and sense making of each student leader – a double hermeneutic process of reflecting on reflection. However, interpretative phenomenology is focused on the detail of what a particular experience means to a particular individual – it is idiographic research (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

For this reason, phenomenology is well suited to research that wants to explore the detail of particular cases and compare smaller samples of participants in qualitative research projects. Phenomenological research differs from narrative analysis in its attempt to understand a phenomenon by comparing similar narratives instead of studying only one particular narrative. Interpretative phenomenology wants to examine the convergences and divergences between cases within a sample of a research population, which requires that sufficiently homogenous participants be selected for such a study.

A phenomenological study proceeds with four steps, namely bracketing, intuition, analysis and description (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009; Van Manen, 2014). ‘Bracketing’ refers to the intentional reduction of experiences under investigation to focus on how the participant and the research perceive a phenomenon. The purpose of bracketing is to enable the reality as perceived to show clearly and ensure an authentic voice of the participant. Thereafter, the researcher collects data and hears the experiences of participants with ‘intuition’ in order to precisely recount how the participants perceive their reality and to remain open to different and diverse meanings they make of their lives. As a third step, the researcher ‘analyses’ the narrative interviews of the participants by coding and categorising concepts and the essential meanings from the data – the essences of the phenomenon begin to emerge.

As a final step in the research methodology, the researcher develops a 'description' of the phenomenon based on the interrelated concepts that emerged from the analysis. This means that the phenomenological research process begins by developing descriptions of individual cases through integrated first-person accounts of critical episodes and the contextual background in the master narrative of a participant. Next follows the process of coding themes and concepts as units of meaning, which in the process of coding develop into a set of master themes and thematic subcategories that the researcher use as conceptual tools to interpret the case study and also to describe the phenomenon revealed by the investigation.

Coding is the heart of the phenomenological method. A code is generated by the researcher and is a word or phrase that symbolically describes units of data as essential and salient to the inquiry, later to be used in detecting patterns, categorising meaning and theorising (Saldana, 2013). Coding is the process to used to link collected sets of data with codes that explain the meaning of the data, while codifying is the process of recoding the data in several cycles of coding (Saldana, 2013). Cycles of coding make it possible for patterns of human experience and meanings to emerge.

I use interpretative phenomenology as research methodology for this study for its focus on a detailed analysis of lived experience, but I use life histories as methodology to develop the data to analyse patterns of critical incidents emerging from the lives of students in the study.

3.5 Life histories as data

Research on youth in post-conflict environments uses life histories to study the experience of new generations in transitional contexts that demand grounded readings bracketed from earlier contexts and analysis, as in the case of post-apartheid South African youth (Newman & Lannoy, 2014).

The method locates individual agency within the social contexts on meso- and macro-levels and provides a way to study the minute detail of meanings young people attach to their lived realities as well as explains alternative realities that break with master narratives of social hierarchy (Coetzee, Elliker & Rau, 2013; Finley, 2014). It allows the researcher to explore the very personal experiences of participants within the historical context of their social, political and cultural contexts – participants tell the story of their own lives, which reveal all the complexities of psychosocial struggle.

The method is focused on writing up life histories in as much detail as possible to ensure rich accounts of experience that enable authentic interpretation of lives and description of phenomena (Goodson & Gill, 2011). This process is a collaborative project that moves beyond only narrating a story to searching for further insights to make sense of the story. Life *stories* leave the interpretative task with the study participant, who determines the meaning attached in the story and subsequently leaves the researcher to analyse the story alone. In life *history* research, the participant and researcher together interpret the story and through this collaboration become co-authors of its meanings – a dialogic encounter of co-constructed ethnography between interviewee and interviewer (Cann & DeMeulenaere, 2012; Goodson & Gill, 2011).

This is an important distinction for my research as a project in interpretative phenomenology. Since I am interested in the detail of these four student leaders' perceptions and sense making of their experiences, simply collecting their biographies of racial attitudes and interaction would not offer the interpretative data the study requires. This study moves intentionally from transcribed interviews as narratives sources to co-authored life narratives (Chapters 6-9) as primary data for analysis. Interviews become sites for imaginative narrative construction.

I used the life histories approach as methodology to develop the life biographies of the students in the study, but also to mediate the analysis and synthesis of the data. Narratives work with sites, actors, scripts, plots and temporalities of experiences that orientate, complicate and resolve the life stories of participants (Goodson & Gill, 2011; Singer *et al*., 2013). Similar trends in sites, actors, scripts, plots and temporalities of the life stories of different study participants allow for shared narrative structures to emerge across narratives, which make comparative readings of the unique experiences and meaning-making of different people possible.

Therefore, I used life histories as a method to construct the life narratives of the students with similar themes and narrative structures, while bracketing the meanings and interpretations of each unique story. The approach enabled comparisons of experience and meaning making between the different narratives, which in turn allowed convergences and divergences to emerge to provide a synthesis of the data that describe the phenomenon of change leadership.

The life narratives enabled the twofold programme of interpretative phenomenology to describe lived experience and then interpret lives to define the phenomenon.

3.6 Participants

The selection of study participants is critical to interpretative phenomenology and the life histories methodology. This is the first phase of the study that requires bracketing in order to prevent the selection of participants that appeal to the assumptions of the researcher – to avoid researchers telling their own stories (Goodson & Gill, 2011).

I interviewed four (4) student leaders for their recognised role as change leaders in the post-Reitz campus community. I recruited student leaders who played a leading role in racial reconciliation in residences at the university, as part of the post-Reitz intervention programme, but who also stood out from the crowd due to unconventional incidents they lived through on campus.

This requirement achieved a selection of participants who were assertive in the interviews and so ensured the coherence and authenticity of their life stories. It also ensured rich incidents as part of the narrative data. Two black students (male and female) and two white students (male and female) participated in unstructured interviews in 2012 reflecting on their experiences of race and racism during their formative years and their life on campus (2007-2012). I then used the critical incident technique to distinguish the experiences most critical to a life story of each of the student leaders.

Due to the dialogic nature of life history interviews and the intimacy of the conversation on lived experience, the selection of participants required measures of trust between interviewer and interviewee. This is what Jansen (2016) and Young (2011) refer to as the entanglements of people in qualitative research – no one is innocent, but researcher and participant are involved equally in the process of narrating and interpreting lived experience.

This means that selecting participants required as much purposiveness as it did bracketing. The research required of participants that they could offer rich descriptions relevant to the study, with divergent biographies of race and gender to compare narratives, and enough trust in the researcher and the confidentiality of the process to participate openly and authentically in the study. For these reasons I used purposive sampling to achieve the intended levels of entanglement and bracketing as well as to ensure an intensity of analysis (Coe, 2012). Thus, I used purpose sampling to select participants as insider-researcher, so that established relationships of trust supported the process of collecting data (narrating their stories).

I ensured bracketing by writing up their life narratives in conversation with the students, who retained the right of final approval of the biographies. I used the approved biographies as the narrative and interpretative data, and publish each narrative as approved by the relevant student leaders in separate chapters of the dissertation (Chapters 6-9).

Introduced by Flanagan (1954), the method focuses on a reflective examination of the cognitive and affective levels a of a critical incident as 'snapshot' of important encounters, in order to achieve a new and transformative understanding of an experience (Collins & Pieterse, 2007). The technique consists of successive steps that ascertain the aims of the activity being studied, developing specifications for the study and then collecting, analysing and interpreting the data (Butterfield *et al*., 2005). The specifications that qualify incidents as relevant are critical to this technique, as the specification must define the types of relevant situations, the extent of its impact on the general aim of the study and the decision on who observes (Butterfield *et al*., 2005).

However, more than only acting as a tool in constructing the life narratives, the critical incident technique also reflects the episodic nature of autobiographical memories that construct someone's life histories and scripts of narrative identity (Singer *et al*., 2013). It shows the reconstructed past and imagined future of evolving life stories (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

More so than an attempt at firstly constructing a detailed historical account of lives or of the process of transformation that followed the Reitz trauma on campus, this methods enables this research to describe and explore the lived experiences of students and how they made sense of the process of change.

3.7 Insider research

Research interviews between people familiar with one another and equally engaged in the phenomenon the study explores is central to this investigation – it is insider research, where the identity and positionality of the researcher are not distant, but present in a relational encounter (Chikkatur & Jones-Walker, 2013; Kelly, 2014). The distinction is important as it reveals complexities of power relations that affect the validity and transferability of the research.

In this study, my position as insider researcher is an important consideration, as I served as dean of students during the post-Reitz transformation process and engaged on a collegial level with the four student leaders during their processes of becoming and acting as change leaders on campus. In some instances I also feature as actor in critical episodes in the life narratives as related by the four student leaders of this study.

However, in contrast with general definitions that use the homogeneity of in-group membership between researcher and participants to distinguish insider from outsider research, in this study, I define insider positionality with the entanglements of intimate involvement of the interviewer and interviewee in the same environment and process of change (Greene, 2014; Jansen, 2016; Young, 2011). This was not about similar racial, gender or ethnic-cultural positionalities, but about similar and competing positionalities as leaders for change.

Relational engagements and insider positionality make intimate access to participants possible, strengthen the interaction of researcher and participant with familiarity and trust, and provide a knowledge base for authentic and detailed descriptions and interpretation of lifeworlds (Chavez, 2008; Greene, 2014; Hoskins & White, 2013). Insider researchers, however, face the risks of subjectivity and bias (Chavez, 2008; Greene, 2014). A closer proximity to and subjective familiarity with the people involved in the phenomenon under investigation and its context may narrow the view of both researcher and participant. This may negatively affect the richness of data and the validity of its interpretation. Similarly, the researcher's values, beliefs and perspectives about the people, events and contexts involved in the study may influence the design, methodology and findings of a study. I overcome the risks of insider bracketing and bias as part of the phenomenological research methodology and the positionality of the study participants as co-researchers.

I combined the methods of bracketing, coding and critical life memories as methodology to resolve researcher bias, while I framed the research and research interviews as dialogic encounters of collaborative research between researcher and participants. The participants acted as co-researchers by reflecting on possible interpretations of their experiences in a second round of interviews, which followed the first round of interviews that focused on describing their life histories. They also read and reviewed their biographies critically and approved the final versions as contained in the dissertation, which ensured trustworthiness of the data and supported the transferability of the research findings.

3.8 Trustworthiness and transferability

Validity in phenomenological research refers to trustworthiness in the process of interpretation and the transferability of the findings of a study to other contexts and situations (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015). As outlined above, bracketing and cycles of verification and horizontalisation ensure reliability in phenomenological research.

Bracketing is the process of searching for and avoiding or intentionally engaging researcher bias in the design of the study, selection of participants, collection and analysis of data and interpretations of codes and themes. *Verification* refers to techniques that verify the veracity of critical incidents narrated by participants in research interviews, as well as verifying the authenticity of the researcher interpretations of the data. *Horizontalisation* refers to the involvement of the participants as co-researchers who validate the researcher descriptions and interpretations of their lived experiences and review the categories of meaning the research proposes to make sense of and theorise the phenomenon under investigation (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015).

The transferability of phenomenological research results from the generalisability of the findings of the study, although not in the same way as quantitative generalisation. Generalisation in phenomenology is either existential or singular (Van Manen, 2014). Existential generalisation refers to the essential understandings of a phenomenon, while singular generalisation refers to the descriptions of unique cases. Transferability of findings in this approach refers only to potential new understandings of shared phenomenon, and not direct application of findings to different situations or cases. Transferability in phenomenological research requires, among others, heuristic questions that lead to reflection on data, rich descriptions of experience, and interpretative depth, all of which go beyond everyday understandings and rigor in iterative readings and deductions (Van Manen, 2014).

In this study, I achieved *bracketing* through intentionally declaring and engaging positionality with study participants during the process of data collection. I achieved *verification* by comparing participant accounts of public events with external reports in formal university documents or media reports. I also verified the factuality of my descriptions of critical incidents and the meanings they attached to their experiences with the participants. I achieved *horizontalisation* with a second round of interviews to test bridge-building as interpretative framework, and with participant reviews of my written accounts of their lives.

I ensure *transferability* of the study by synthesising the earlier thematic analyses of the four life narratives and by further developing my theoretical readings of the perspectives on change that emerged in the four life stories I explored in the study. The synthesis of themes enables an existential generalisation of the study findings, while the theoretical development provides a singular generalisation to make sense of each unique life history.

3.9 Ethical considerations

The most important ethical considerations for this study are confidentiality of data, ethical and relational integrity of the researcher and the research process and validity of research design. Confidentiality of the data protects the integrity of the research participants by ensuring anonymity in data collection, archiving, analysis and reporting. Relational integrity refers to the ethical interaction between the researcher and participants during the research process, which depends on foregrounding and honouring the voice and lived experience of the participant. Ethical integrity of the researcher refers to researcher reflexivity and intentionality in engaging bias and positionality. Validity in research design refers to the methodological measures undertaken to ensure trustworthiness and transferability of the study.

In this study, I achieve *confidentiality* by securing all data confidentially, numbering interviews and transcripts without reference to individual biographical details and using pseudonyms for participants in the research reports. I discussed confidentiality in detail with the participants during the interviews, informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any point during the research process and continuously checked their trust and confidence in the process with participants. I achieve *relational integrity* of the study by gaining informed consent from the participants prior to engaging the students in the research interviews, such as by testing a possible conceptual framework to make sense of their lives with the four student leaders during subsequent rounds of interviews.

I also provided my drafts of their biographies to the student leaders to review and approve as formal part of the research process. I achieved *researcher integrity* by continuously bracketing my thinking, exploring my assumptions and reading and re-reading interview transcripts in an iterative process of analysis and interpretation. The study gained formal *validity* with a certificate of ethical approval from the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State, and research validity through bracketing, verification and horizontalisation.

3.10 Account of the research

The central concern of my research design is with the life stories of the four student leaders of the study. I considered the telling of their life stories as important as interpreting their stories to answer my research questions and find new meaning. I selected phenomenology as framework for the research and life histories as methodology in my design so that the research would achieve both an authentic representation of lives and a rigorous reading of lived experience. However, it is in the actual research activity that my concern and design 'come to life'.

In order to clearly reflect the centrality of the student life narratives in this research I distinguished three parts in the research project and also report on my research in this dissertation in three parts. The three parts deal with my research design (Part I), the student biographies as stories of change (Part II) and the findings of the study (Part III).

Against the background and interpretative framework of the study presented in Part I (Chapters 1-4), in Part II of the dissertation I introduce the 'stories of change' of the four student leaders – the biographies I constructed from the critical events they shared during the unstructured research interviews (Chapters 6-9).

The life narratives as presented here aim to achieve two goals, namely to present each narrative as unique biography of a participant and to reflect the similarities among narratives for its comparative value in analysis across lives. The stories were 'co-authored' by the researcher and the participants in a process of reading and re-reading, and writing and rewriting. The participants read and commented on their life stories after I drafted the life narratives from the interview transcripts. Based on their comments, I made changes to the final drafts of each narrative.

All the narratives follow a similar historical and thematic structure, which is reflected in the headings and subheadings of the narratives. Using a basic timeline of life stages relevant to the biographies, each of the narratives historically reflects in its paragraph headings the life stages of early life, high school, arriving on campus, stepping into leadership and leading for change.

To reflect progression of their lives across life stages, the biographies reflect the critical incidents during a stage of life in successive and numbered paragraph headings.

This allows for a historical framework to read the stories together and gain a broad perspective across lives. The paragraph headings also indicate the incidents representing a turn in how the student leaders made sense of race and racism and the new perspectives they develop over the course of the interviews. Finally, the headings also reflect their comments in response to "bridge-building" as proposed interpretive framework.

However, the subheadings (not numbered) under each paragraph follow no particular pattern, but mark the experiences that describe the life events unique to each student leader. The distinction between the paragraph headings and subheadings is important, because the headings indicate the broad convergences that emerged across and between the four biographies, while the subheadings introduce the distinctive moments of struggle experiences that are particular to the life of a student leader. A reader can simultaneously notice the distinctive incidents per life and the converging patterns of experience across lives.

I use direct quotes of the student leaders from the interview transcripts in descriptions of events and place the stories within the actual events of broader sociocultural and political processes that gave rise to the lived experience of participants in a transitional society. I checked the factuality of written accounts with participants during the drafting of narratives and as far as possible with other sources as well, which are included as footnotes throughout the narrative chapters (Chapters 5 and 6-9).

In relation to the Reitz incident the narratives read together paint a picture of life on campus from 2006 to 2011, with the first narrative reflecting the story of Thabelo, a first-year student in 2006 – a year prior to the introduction of the new policy on racial integration in residences. Dawie, Aletta and Lerato were first-year students in 2007, 2008 and 2009, respectively.

All participants the served in student leadership positions from 2009-2011, allowing their combined narratives to show life on campus prior to, during, after Reitz and as part of the post-Reitz interventions in residences and on campus. Thabelo's narrative offers the most detail on campus racial climate prior to Reitz, while Lerato's offers the most detail on the lived interventions for change thereafter.

For the sake of space and readability, the progression from more to less background information the narrative chapters are different in length. Chapter 6, as the first biography, purposefully includes lengthier details regarding campus life prior to Reitz.

Chapter 6 is taken as read as background in the subsequent chapters 7-9 so that all three are the same length and present similar levels of detail. The historically staggered presentation of the life narratives from Thabelo to Lerato, who arrived on campus in successive years (2006 to 2009), allows the reader to note the progression of racial distance among students on campus, i.e. reading the intensity of campus racial segregation in Thabelo's narrative and the progression towards togetherness in the following stories of Dawie, Aletta and Lerato.

I decided to also develop a basic 'biography' of the change interventions introduced on campus, which provide a description of the post-Reitz institutional context on campus and allow for a more detailed reading of the experiences of the student leaders. I considered this outline of interventions as a fifth story of change and included it as a separate chapter (Chapter 5) in Part II of the dissertation, the stories of change. However, I did not develop this outline as a complete historical account of all interventions on campus at the time, but included those programmes that emerge as relevant to this research from the critical incidents the student leaders reported in the interview transcripts and related in their biographies. As a further attempt at bracketing researcher's bias, I approached the description of the interventions from perspective of the four student leaders' lived experience. I do so by describing only those interventions referenced by the student leaders during their interviews and that were included in their life narratives.

While the change context for the post-Reitz experiences of the student leaders focused on the residences, the intertwined nature of residence and campus student life caused the residence diversity project soon to become a sub-set of broader interventions to transform student affairs in "definition, focus and method" (Buys, 2014, p. 1).

I also described these programmes drawing on (and referencing) official university documents, media reports and other sources. This ensured that these accounts of the institutional context of the student leaders' lives on campus after Reitz are factually sound.

However, the four life narratives as captured in chapters 6-9 of the dissertation represent the primary data for analysis in this study, because the texts were reviewed and approved by the study participants as a true reflection of their memories of incidents, as well as how they made sense of their experiences – it offers authentic, first-person data.

While the transcribed interviews and thematically coded research memos provided the material to draft the narratives, the life stories represent the reduced and bracketed data that reflect and reveal the essential parts of the phenomenon under investigation as it emerged from the research encounter between researcher and participant.

The life narratives were constructed following an analysis of similarities in the historical development, of sites and performances of struggle and in the shifts in how the student leaders made sense of race. In this way, a similar temporality and narrative logic emerged across narratives for writing the stories of change (Part II). The framework in turn allowed for the thematic analysis of critical incidents of each narrative and for the patterns of incidents across narratives. I use the patterns of experiences among the narratives as foundation for a synthesis of narrative themes, which in turn offer a conceptual scheme to build the theoretical findings of the study.

Part III of the dissertation reports the analysis of the stories of change as data for the study. I present the report in two chapters that outline the narrative and thematic analysis (Chapter 10) and that discuss and theorise its findings (Chapter 11). The research findings form an integrated whole with the stories of change, which were written based on the narrative coding of the different lives – an exercise that prepared the chapters of Part II, which in turn provide the actual data to analyse for themes and thematic schemes.

I approached the analysis of the stories of change in two phases. During the first phase I coded patterns of experience across the four lives by exploring convergences and divergences between them. As the narratives chapters of the dissertation will show, the biographies show similar struggles with race at home and at school, as well as similar struggles with the politics of race and integration on campus.

Following Reitz, their stories show similar turns from racial distance to togetherness and similar initiatives to lead for change. In similar ways, they shift from racial conformity to bridge-building as framework for identity and knowledge. I used the converging patterns of experience to develop the second phase of the analysis, namely to code the themes and master themes of my analysis of their lives. The similarities of racial hierarchy that marked their home, school and campus environments also determine the prominent categories of divergence among their stories, namely race and gender.

The continuation of racial and gender hierarchies determines different positionalities for the participants in social structures – white and black and male and female. However, a closer reading of the critical incidents of different life narratives shows that the converging patterns of experience outweigh the divergences of race and gender – this dynamic represent one of the unexpected findings of the study. Their lives seem to follow similar trajectories from naïve complicity with racial hierarchy to conscious agency to build new ways of togetherness beyond race.

I distinguish 'similarity' and 'convergence' as descriptive concepts during this phase of my analysis. The different life events in and unique to each student leader's life revealed a corresponding narrative development between lives – similar timelines, characters, sites and characters, which I categorised as 'similar'. The similar life events across lives revealed corresponding types of experiences and themes of struggle with racial knowledge and identity, which I categorised as 'converging'. I considered the distinction important, because the different and opposite experiences that black and white, and female and male lives to my surprise showed similar narrative development, as well as converging patterns and themes. I noticed a 'mirror-effect' across diverging lives within the racial and gender hierarchies of the student leaders' environments.

Very clear and solid distinctions of black struggle against disadvantage and white struggle with complicity were not present in the interview transcripts – the distinctions were present, but much more fluid and intertwined than I assumed it would be. It was as if the student leaders' lives revealed ever-increasing convergences in the patterns of events and types of struggle with race, even with different racial and gender positionalities. As I show in my analysis (Chapter 10) this dynamic reveals the role of a transitional environment in a transforming society in the student leaders' lives.

Following the two phases of analysis of the life narratives, I used my framework of concepts as introduced in Part I of the study (Chapter 4) to name, categorise and synthesise the emerging themes, and to develop and theorise the findings of the research. As the synthesis will show, three groups of themes emerged from the data, namely themes of transition, in-betweenness and ignorance. I focused on the conceptual consensus and contradictions among the themes to develop a conceptual description of the structure of themes and processes of change based. This served as my framework *to construct, explain and develop a theory of change* grounded in the lived experience of the four student leaders of the study.

A synthesis of the emerging themes revealed four conceptual tensions, namely a dialectic tension between correlating themes, a tension between surface and deeper, underlying realities across themes, an increasing tension of in-betweenness as alternative positionality in hierarchies and a tension between knowing and being. Using the dialectic correlations among themes, I outlined two distinct categories of racial knowledge and identity in the lives of participants, and used the emerging themes to describe each – an "epistemology of ignorance" and an "epistemology of transitionality".

I then summarised the research findings by first offering an account of the four student leaders' experiences as a shared story of change, including a summary of each life narrative. I outlined the main aspects of the analysis, synthesis and emerging structure by naming conclusions I consider important to draw from each group of findings, such as regarding the continued struggle with race of South Africa's 'born-free' generation.

Finally, I developed conclusions regarding 'transition' as definitive trait of the student leaders' lifeworld (thematic analysis), the struggle of ignorance and bridge-building that plays out in their world (thematic synthesis) and conclusions regarding the metatheoretical development of bridge-building as theory of knowledge and identity (conceptual structure).

CHAPTER 4
A FRAMEWORK OF CONCEPTS

In this chapter, I introduce a "framework of concepts" to analyse and interpret the narrative data at the heart of this research. As a qualitative study in the phenomenological tradition, the design of the research discourages the selection of a particular theory for the analysis, but rather allows for the gradual emergence of a conceptual framework grounded in the thematic concepts drawn from the data through the research processes of interpretation and reinterpretation.

Seven core concepts, drawn from the literature, guide the analysis of the student leaders' stories, which I will revisit for their explanatory validity in the discussion of my research findings. I selected critical concepts for my analysis and interpretation from a variety of the conceptual approaches engaged in the literature review (Chapter 2). As such I consider this research an interdisciplinary project that draws not only on education, but also on psychology, sociology and theology.

4.1 Human becoming: Freire, Lacan and the struggle for humanisation

I begin with the concept of *humanisation* or, in Freirean terms, the process of *becoming human* (Freire, 1996; O'Brien, 2011). Becoming human refers to the never-ending struggle of individuals and communities to gain critical consciousness about their lives and to transcend their conditions of oppression (Kincheloe, 2008; Darder, 2015). Moreover, humanisation deals with the agency of a person to know, name and act on the world in which she lives. The associated Freirean notions of subjectivity, agency and dialogue therefore give meaning, in this study, to the process of becoming human of young people in the post-apartheid period – to redress the processes of dehumanisation (Gill & Niens, 2014).

Freire (1996) defines this humanisation as a *struggle* for critical consciousness, a struggle of these student leaders for liberation from the historical realities of their time and the particular situations that require their cultural action – their historicity. Consciousness must continuously be won through a struggle to unmask the hidden ignorance that prevents a person's ability to reflect and act on her world (Apple 2000, 2011). This is the struggle of *conscientisation*, which is the ongoing work people undertake to understand the self as

subjects of history, recognise the conditions of injustice of their world, and gain the agency to transform it.

Freirean pedagogy focuses on a problem-posing dialogue through which people uncover themes of meaning to make sense of their positionalities and performances in society. In this way, they become cultural actors achieving 'cultural action' to transform the world. However, as people and communities progress through successive cycles of thematic analysis in the process of conscientisation, they establish a process of *transitivity* for their society (Costa, 2012). This is the process of transcending ignorance taking place in a society following the cultural projects for change achieved by critically conscious citizens. Transitivity refers to the transitional phase of a cultural revolution that Freire argues is the aim of the struggle for humanisation in every society.

Transitivity marks the movement of a society from one to the next historical epoch, during which time critically conscious subjects undertake new cultural projects. In transitivity, cultural agents discover new themes to guide their society's understanding of itself. They publicly announce new ideas and design new ways of organising their society. Transitivity then is the impact that human becoming in Freirean terms has on a society. It is a critical consciousness that disrupts and transforms naiveté and oppression to agency and freedom (Giroux, 2011). Conscientisation and transformative action lead to a new awakening driven by new themes, meanings and projects for justice.

The new themes and projects for humanisation of Freirean pedagogy become possible when the dichotomy of reflection and action, or theory and practice, disappears, as reflected in the Freirean notion of *praxis*. This is the simultaneous work of people to reflect and act on their world. When people gain critical consciousness and develop themes and tasks that reflect on, name and change their cultural and political conditions, they do so through the closely related projects of interpreting reality, developing practices based on their understanding of reality and the transforming action this demands – the praxis of the cultural revolution Freire considered the result of a humanising pedagogy.

Subjectivity defines the universality of Freirean thinking – people that transcend a life as the objects of cultural and political hierarchies and become the subjects, the authors of their being in, and naming and acting on, the world (Mulcahy, 2011). Subjectivity describes the shift from being in to acting on the world, but also the movement from acting to reflecting on our

being and doing – the movement from action to reflection, which describes the relationship between being and meaning, between the real and the symbolic (De Klerk, 2009).

Freirean thinking resonates with the psychoanalytic reading of subjectivity by Jacques Lacan, which further refines the concept of subjectivity and the symbolic as it plays out in the lives of the study participants. Simply put, where Freire engages social dynamics of human praxis, Lacan offers the psychoanalytic perspective on the human struggle to make sense of and meaningfully translate our world – two sides of the same coin to describe the relationship between the real and the symbolic of being human and human activity.

This is an important distinction as it relates to the alternative experiences of the student leaders engaged in this study. It explains the role of the symbolic in their process to imagine and then construct different ways of being, doing and leading.

Lacan defines what is real firstly in terms of the symbolic – human activity always has a symbolic dimension that affords our actions meaning and makes possible our translation of reality when we interact with others. An unconscious symbolic field underpins all being and doing and speaks in and to us before we express and voice through language what we think. The symbolic and the real are not mere reflections of one another, because the symbolic has agency. For Lacan the symbolic leads what is real through symbolic practices that constitute our imagination about what is possible as well as to translate our reality in new ways. The symbolic makes hope and belief possible. Lacan's contribution to the notion of subjectivity as it relates to Freirean humanisation is the definition of interconnectedness between the real, the symbolic and the imaginary. What is real is a result of, but cannot be reduced to what is symbolic, because reality is more than the definitions we use to make sense of our lives. What is real is also imagined, but cannot be univocally defined, because we attach diverse meanings to our lived realities.

How the student leaders in this study thought about and actualised their identities as leaders for reconciliation reflects a struggle with a symbolic shared identity beyond the real identities of racial distance among their peers – a symbolic sense of togetherness beyond race gave the students hope that an alternative reality to what their racialised environments demanded was possible.

Freirean pedagogy and the Lacanian symbolic are useful to this study for its ontological positioning of transformation as a task of humanisation and for its descriptive tools to analyse the student leaders' cultural-political struggle with race and for change.

In Freirean terms, the historical task of humanity is defined as one not of simply being in the world, but as one of becoming human by knowing and acting on the world with critical consciousness.

In Lacanian terms, human action in the real world interacts with and results from the symbolic 'speaking' to us in our thinking, as well as in re-imagination of our lived realities that follow the symbols of new meaning we formulate as we think. The narratives of the student leaders' struggle with race offer rich descriptions of this struggle for conscientisation and the real presence of the symbolic in the hierarchies of race that prevented their subjectivity.

Thus, in Freirean and Lacanian terms, the leaders' experiences of Reitz and the post-Reitz interventions for change reflected their journeys of humanisation and re-imagination, as much as their cultural and symbolic action as *subjects* in the projects for change on campus.

Freirean conceptual structures provide well-founded theoretical tools to describe the lived experience of the study participants. As conceptual framework, these make sense of cultural and political systems of ignorance, and of the critical consciousness the students gained as cultural and political actors to transcend it. The Freirean notions of subjectivity, agency, dialogue, theme development and cultural projects, among others, provide a conceptual landscape and an alertness to the presence of critical incidents, patterns of experience and themes for analysis in the data.

However, in the context of South Africa, students do not become human in isolation of their racial otherness. This involves varying degrees of contact, sometimes-intimate contact, between black and white youth on university campuses.

4.2 Social contact: the identity hierarchies of in-groups and out-groups

It was the social psychologist Gordon Allport (1956) who made the longstanding empirical observation that contact between diverse groups of people would reduce intergroup prejudice. The well-established conclusion is the foundation of intergroup contact theory, which in

South African literature on student, race and change serves as a leading theory for analysis. While several studies contest the success of contact theory, many South African programmes for racial integration on campuses continue to use intergroup contact theory.

The notion of racial contact directs institutional transformation initiatives ranging from student profiles in class and residences to intercultural student life programming and the design of campus facilities – all targeted at and attempting to build contact between racially diverse groups of students, as a priority solution in transformation.

The contact hypothesis argues for the decrease of anxiety for in-groups about out-groups, where in-groups are the familiar groups a person associates with and out-groups are those the in-group are unfamiliar with or in conflict. Allport argues that intergroup anxiety results from lack of knowledge about out-groups, which decreases when in-group knowledge about an out-group increases. As anxiety decreases, so does the in-group sense of an out-group threat, and empathy with and positive evaluations of out-groups increase.

Allport indicates four conditions for contact to reduce prejudice, namely equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals and support by social and institutional authorities. Further studies revealed further mechanisms in contact that deals with racial prejudice, which in the main include learning about the out-group, changing behaviour, building affective (emotional) and in-group reassessment of out-group stereotypes and resulting anxieties (Pettigrew, 1998). Emotional connection between in- and out-groups plays a strong mediating role to establish empathy and so overcome prejudice and distance (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Henri Tajfel refines the notion of in- and out-groups as part of the development of social identity theory, which deals with an individual's self-concept based on their perceived membership of a relevant social group – their social identity. Closely related to the sense of self is the perceived status of in- and out-groups in relation to one another. The social status of a group predicts the behaviour of the group and group members, determines the legitimacy and stability of that status, and directs the ability of people to move between groups.

The methodology of in- and out-groups used in intergroup contact and social identity is useful to this study as a conceptual tool to indicate the social and cultural-political structure of the lifeworld of the participants. As the life narratives will show, the established hierarchies of race and gender that play out without interruption at home and at school transferred to the student leaders a sense of 'us-and-them'. It became a defining feature of life, though not

overtly named and taught as a social code and norm. On campus the violent traumas of the distinction between racial in- and out-groups surfaced in racial terms, within the open social organisation of student life.

The notion of in- and out-groups is useful as it facilitates the analysis, in the life narratives, of the shifts revealed in racial knowledge and identity of the student leaders. As the analysis will show, racial *in-group* membership, and also relationships with members of a racial *out-group* constantly play a central in their experiences of change.

However, this methodology is limited in this context, in that it offers insufficient conceptual frameworks to explore the alternative experiences of in-betweenness reflected in the four student leaders' stories of change. As a tool to reflect on the cultural and political positionalities and performances of the students, the notion of in- and out-groups only allows for definitions of reconciliation and change leadership in terms of the binary opposites of black and white.

As intergroup contact would imply, a third position beyond rival groups is not possible, since a person's psychosocial sense of self always and inevitably places him/her in a binary of groups. Yet, it is this hierarchical structure of the concept of in- and out-groups that allows for the theoretical development of alternative notions of knowledge and identity. Since the opposite groups are often well defined, any possible positionality beyond the two rival groups may emerge more clearly as an alternative contextualisation related to the original in- and out-groups.

This possibility emerges in the final stages of the participant interviews when I requested the student leaders' comment on a new concept ('bridge-builder') to describe their sense of self and leadership for change. All the students quickly grasped and adopted the proposed third category of knowledge and identity as a clear and precise positionality in relation to black and white identities. This means that if black and white here function as the in- or out-groups, then bridge-building may prove to be a third positionality in relation to the opposite groups – a possible 'intergroup', if you will.

I introduce the concept of 'bridge-building' below in paragraph 4.6, which deals with theoretical concepts of change relevant to this study. Hence, while noting the limitation of the notion of in- and out-groups, not only does it provide for a tool of analysis in describing and

reading the four student leaders' experiences of change, but it also offered a platform for considering new perspectives during my interpretation of the data and theorising of the findings.

4.3 Ignorance: its knowledge regime and scapegoating performance

Racial hierarchies are maintained by intentional strategies to sustain a state of 'not-knowing' about injustice and oppression, as Charles Mills (1997) argues, for the racial contract that sustains white privilege and black oppression. In contrast to the general assumption that ignorance result from an innocent lack of knowledge, ignorance is understood as a determined process to avoid knowledge. It is an intentional project to engage selected regimes of knowledge that entrench and reproduce social systems of privilege and oppression – this includes, for instance, both false racial beliefs and the absence of true belief about racial out-groups.

Not knowing (naiveté) or knowing only in selected ways makes up epistemologies of ignorance that sustain injustice.

Epistemologies of ignorance employ particular projects of knowing to sustain their definition of reality, the present and the past – projects to manufacture, maintain and disseminate ignorance. It chooses particular definitions to make sense of the past and explain a present that absolves the oppressor from all guilt and shame. It uses these definitions to build theories to define racial others, defend distances and justify performances of racial oppression. It selects what versions of reality to engage and what memories to retain in the lives of people and so ensures that the privileged in society become unable to know the reality they created. However, the projects to sustain ignorance also make use of inaction to sustain hierarchy and power, with the pervasive reality of silence – reticence, which is wilful silence - performed by in- and out-groups when confronted with knowledge they hold about injustice. Such projects are not the result of neglect, but are systematically created through structural practices of societal systems and group identities – it is a cultural and political project for naiveté in the face of overwhelming realities of trauma, guilt, shame and complicity (Kidron, 2010).

The notion of complicity is critical to epistemologies of ignorance, as Melissa Steyn (2012) argues when noting that racial hierarchies not only continue because of the ignorance of the oppressor, but also because of the ignorance of the oppressed, though for different reasons.

While whites employ ignorance to misrepresent the world to protect their privileged positionality in a racial hierarchy, blacks employ ignorance to avoid the violence of racial subjugation, to access what resources are available and protect next generations from the brunt of racial oppression.

The concept of ignorance as strategic knowledge is powerfully illustrated in Jansen's seminal study, Knowledge in the Blood (2009), on the racial knowledge of second-generation white students at an Afrikaans university. The book explored the causes that made young people in post-apartheid South Africa hold similar racial hatred and troubled knowledge to that of their parents.

Drawing on similar work of Hoffman (2005) on second-generation knowledge of the Holocaust, Jansen, as we have seen, named this troubled thinking as 'knowledge in the blood'. He shows the continuation of hidden knowledge from home to school to sports field to church and to campus in a way that sustains ignorance about racism and the apartheid past in the white, Afrikaans community. This analysis shows the powerful transmission and reproduction through intergenerational networks of troubled racial knowledge (Jansen, 2009a; Argenti & Schramm, 2010). It recommends pedagogical interventions for change leadership to interrupt the process of knowledge transfer.

The concepts of ignorance as knowledge and its intergenerational transmission are useful to my study as a framework for rich descriptions of the lifeworld of the students and as a tool to analyse the student leaders' struggle with knowledge regimes as they move from school to campus and into a post-Reitz world. The lifeworld of the students without exception conformed to the concepts and definitions of ignorance epistemologies and showed an increasing intensity, as racial hierarchies became the explicit structure of campus social organisation prior to Reitz. Their life narratives reveal and confirm the reality and ways of intergenerational transmission of 'knowledge in the blood' for all the students and show how this process employs various projects of ignorance to leave the students complicit in the racial hierarchies of society at large.

However, the concepts of ignorance as knowledge do not sufficiently explain the alternative experiences to ignorance revealed in the lives of the students, which countered the racial codes and societal norms of racial distance and as such may reveal alternative knowledge they gained while struggling with the dominant epistemologies of ignorance.

Furthermore, these concepts do not offer a detailed analysis or theory of the regime of systematic interventions employed by groups to *deter* in-group members from disrupting established racial hierarchies, through indicating the cost of, and methods to disrupt, troubled racial knowledge.

As I will show in the analysis of the student leaders' stories of change, evidence emerged in the data for both these aspects, namely for alternative knowledge and for a system of projects to discourage nonconformity. In-groups maintain an internal stability of identity violence within the group and with out-groups, as Rene Girard (1982) revealed for the collective performance of *scapegoating* that groups employ to resolve threats to internal stability.

A second tenet in the Girardean theory of the origins of culture, scapegoating theory, describes a collective social enactment of mimesis, the first tenet of Girard's cultural theory. Mimesis refers to the underlying psychological process among people as individuals and as groups to recognise in and seek *resemblances* with others. It is the process of seeking likenesses with others that determines our sense of belonging and our performances as cultural actors of reciprocity and rivalry. This is a psychosocial system based on recognition of sameness and difference in others.

Using sameness and difference as tools of inclusion and exclusion and as rules to determine conformity or non-conformity, a group develops systems of difference to maintain itself. Groups find their stability in maintaining the norms and codes of the group and its positionality in relation to out-groups within the established social hierarchies of its environment. In-groups demand sameness within and difference from out-groups, while considering events and performances of non-conformity as moments of crisis. The crisis develops from the differences that non-conforming members introduce to the in-group or from out-groups' disruptive performances that threaten to upset the established social hierarchies between groups. Such incidents cause an imbalance, bring conflict and disrupt the in-group's collective sense of stability – reciprocity dissipates and violent rivalry ensues. To regain in-group stability and out-group harmony, the crisis must be resolved and the imbalance corrected.

Girard shows that social groups regain balance with the mechanics of *victimisation*. In-groups, either internally or with out-groups, select a substitute as sacrifice for the 'sin' and the 'sinner' that caused the crisis and then assigns guilt to the scapegoat. It proceeds to sacrifice

the scapegoat in a public process of symbolic violence. The group publicly defends the sacrifice by blaming the scapegoat for the crisis of non-conformity and then justifies the violence of humiliation, exile and death by pointing at the renewed sense of balance and harmony that returns to the group thereafter.

However, scapegoating requires the innocence of the scapegoat, who is often selected at random, since the purpose of scapegoating is to regain group stability and intergroup harmony and not the punishment of the individual. As the crisis of non-conformity intensifies, groups become alert to events that may offer a potential scapegoat and a possible opportunity for the symbolic sacrifice required to achieve reconciliation.

The group selects and demonises the scapegoat to justify the sacrifice and do so with myths that define the innocent victim as the 'other', which represents the moment of difference threatening in-group stability. The scapegoat personifies the evil in contrast to the good stability of the group, thereby demanding and justifying its sacrifice. However, the suffering of the scapegoat remains hidden, his voice shunned and silenced through acts of humiliation. The collective adopts strategic ignorance with collective silence about the victimisation perpetrated and by maintaining the disempowered positionality of the victim.

Humiliation holds major significance in scapegoating as it not only deals with public acts of ridicule, but also targets the status claims of a person as a legitimate member of a collective and devastates the relational positionality of a person in his social context – occupational, social and family relationships are disrupted (Torres and Bergner, 2012, p. 493). Worse still, the public shame that follows on collective acts of humiliation continues symbolic violence in the victim's psyche. Long after the ritual sacrifice of the scapegoat has passed, the symbolic violence of his sacrifice haunts the scapegoat – perversely, he becomes the complicit co-author of his own sacrifice as scapegoat. In this way, scapegoating becomes a pinnacle of Girard's mimetic theory, where the victim begins to resemble (mimic) the perpetrator and reproduces the cultural struggle of sameness and difference to his own detriment.

The violence against the scapegoat unifies the group against 'the evil other' or brings together conflicting in- and out-groups – the sacrifice of the scapegoat brings reconciliation within and among groups; it settles the conflict with a final violent unburdening. This unity following the symbolic sacrifice of the scapegoat, which for the collective justifies its assumption of guilt

on the part of the scapegoat and the violent rituals of exclusion and expulsion it perpetrates against the victim.

Moreover, in selecting the scapegoat and performing the ritual of sacrifice, the norms and codes of group membership and the hierarchies among groups are reproduced.

Scapegoating confirms the parameters of belonging and exclusion and enforces the requirements of conformity to established hierarchies, epistemologies and economies. Scapegoating powerfully reminds group members of what is socially desirable and at what cost attempts at difference come. The concept of scapegoating and its development in mimetic theory are useful to this study as it provides descriptive and theoretical apparatus to make sense of systems of ignorance and experiences of retaliation for change leadership the student leaders faced. It also provides conceptual terminologies to draw on in analysing the data and for the theoretical development of *reprisal* as a particular category of experience in the lives of the study participants.

However, the theory of scapegoating does not sufficiently explain the knowledge implications of ritual sacrifice and symbolic violence visible in the life narratives of the students. So for instance, in the case of the hazing incident in Thabelo's narrative, where he survived his traumatic scapegoating as chairperson of his residence, the theory of scapegoating as presented here only deals with the pinnacle events of reprisal and do so only as an event of loss. My research shows that the students gained more for their ability in change leadership from experiences of reprisal – gains of alternative knowledge and identities, which may be inferred from scapegoating and victimhood theories.

Through his symbolic death, the scapegoat gains a privileged knowledge of the injustice, of the collective guilt of the group and of the dynamics of mimetic representation of sameness and difference. This is also the reason he must die, for he represents the collective guilt of the group and holds the knowledge of his innocence and the injustice of victimisation perpetrated by the collective. The scapegoat is the mirror wherein the collective sees its guilt and the witness of that guilt that must be silenced.

The notion of the 'privileged knowledge' of the victim offers an avenue of further inquiry to make sense of the ways in which their in-groups punished the student leaders for not conforming to the racial norms and codes of their environments. This is the series of incidents

I collectively termed ‘reprisal’, as argued in the theoretical findings of the study. As my analysis of the data will show, scapegoating (reprisal) may emerge not only as ‘the perpetrator’, but conversely and unexpectedly as ‘the teacher’ who transfers a privileged knowledge on the nature and demands of change in transitional contexts to its victims. I will argue that reprisal, in conjunction with the demands of a transitional lifeworld, induces an alternative epistemology as foundation for change leadership.

4.4 In-betweenness: knowing and being in transition

Cultural identities become fluid in transitional contexts, such as for post-colonial societies when the clearly defined structures of racial hierarchies are disrupted. Then, as Bhabha (1994) argues for the location of culture in transitional societies, spaces open *in-between* the established binaries of group identities for alternative epistemologies to emerge. These space are the ‘interstices’ that appear in rigid ontologies and epistemologies between colonised and coloniser; fractures in dominant ideologies that result from the overlapping and displacement of different domains of knowledge and identity, where shared identities, cultural value and collective action are negotiated (Bhabha, 1994, pp. 1-2).

In such transitional environments, in-groups and out-groups are more difficult to distinguish; members of a group become ambivalent about ‘the other’ and established groups must work harder to maintain the stability of in-group identity and out-group anxiety. Alternative spaces that open at these interstices as a result of conflicting identities of privilege and oppression in social hierarchies interrupt the projects of mimicry and hybridity that mark the knowledge and identity of the oppressed, the colonised. In the colonial discourse that established the racial binary of white privilege and black oppression, the privileged continuously ratify their cultural superiority. In contrast, the oppressed simultaneously attempts to resemble (mimic) the privileged and reform himself continuously to conform to the coloniser’s definition of ‘the other’ (hybridity) (Bhabha, 1994, p. 122).

The colonial structure of identity determines an *original* centre and *diluted* margin for each identity in a cultural binary, such as for black and for white separately – identity traits that indicate levels of sameness or difference to a group identity and signals belonging to those that best resemble those traits. Individuals at the margins of a group increasingly aspire to resemble the core identity traits at its centre, for instance to become ‘more black’ or ‘more

white' and be recognised for their achievement of conformity. To mimic what you consider the true version of an identity then becomes paramount.

Post-colonial environments interrupt this project of hierarchical identities. Whereas all efforts of in-groups were directed at conforming to the central notions of the group identity, in times of change, the alternative versions of the in-group identity have space to claim their place. It becomes possible for difference to find expression in the group and for new ways of relating to other groups to emerge.

Critical to the concept of new spaces opening in-between established hierarchies of identity is Bhabha's *inversion* of the 'superior' centre and 'inferior' margin of colonial hierarchies. Post-colonial identities develop from the margins of colonial identity, which he redefines as fertile lands of new meaning at its borders, while the centre loses its power to define 'the other' at the margins. Identities at the margins, from the 'borderlands' (Irving & Young, 2004, p. 215), represent the threat of disruption to the centre and become cultural signals of transformation – they subvert the narratives of dominant culture (Kumar, 2011, p. 121).

Cultural change becomes possible in post-colonial identity for two reasons, namely as a result of the familiarity of the colonised with the transitions of identity between the centre and the margin and for the ambivalence and liminality of identities at the margins. This means that the members of a group that least resembled the central traits of their in-group are best able to build alternative cultural identities. Their positionality at the margins makes them comfortable with ambivalence, liminality and transition – the experiences at the heart of the student leaders in this study.

For Bhabha, post-colonial identities are also familiar with the tasks of negotiation and translation required to build a hybridity of knowledge and performance, which enables them to move in-between opposite identities – they are able to build transitional identities in a *third space of meaning*. This is a space that makes new vantage points and ways to observe the possible world, where "the knowledge of identity and difference is as much a question of epistemology and history as it is a perceptual and phenomenological problem that relates to 'how we see' and 'from where we look' (Bhabha, 2009, xii).

The third space in-between opposite identities provides a platform for new consciousness to emerge, new identities and knowledge to grow, and new projects to develop. Moreover, the

third space is related to and in conversation with the binaries and hierarchies within which it establishes itself and functions.

Members of in-groups and out-groups freely move between this shared third space and their original positionalities within the hierarchies they are part of and aim to change. They do so in much the same way as the platform between two flights of stairs remain connected to an upper and lower floor, but still offer space in-between floors – a transitional space.

The concept of a 'third space' of meaning – knowledge and identity as an expression of cultural realities – resonates strongly with the Winnicottean psychoanalytic notion of transitionality, which refers to the experiences of transitional phenomena in the individual's interaction with his/her environment.

Bhabha's investigation of the location of culture as sociological reality corresponds with Donald Winnicott's (1971) psychoanalytic study of the location of cultural experience as psychological reality. A comparative reading of Bhabha and Winnicott's work offers a rich conceptual apparatus for analysis in this study. Winnicott studied the relationship between play and reality to develop his theory of the potential space in-between mother and child in the process of human development – the process through which the child transfers to a place of separateness from his/her mother. Naming this phenomenon 'transitionality', Winnicott describes the role of transitional spaces and objects that the child enters and holds onto in the process of transitioning to the potential space between the mother and child. The mother represents the origin of being and the child's sense of self the distant destination.

The concept offers several further nuances to the notion of 'third space' useful to my research, such as the notion that transitional phenomena are at once something completely different, but also continue to symbolise the places of origin. Transitional identities seemingly still resemble aspects of their original in-groups, but, in reality, they are something completely different. The transitional space in mind and in reality replaces the original space of origin as arena of lived experience – the former is symbolically present, though it seems that the original groups and hierarchies remain intact. Transitionality is an embodied experience, where people manipulate objects and processes in service of a dream, in the same way as a child in free play uses visible objects in her environment in the dream world she creates while playing – transitionality therefore is a potential space of vision and possibility. Such a space

and the transitional performances of people in this space, imply high levels of trust, because they are at once precarious, fragile and exciting (Winnicott, 1971, p. 51).

An important aspect of Winnicottean transitionality is the argument that transitional phenomena disappear when the symbolic embodiment of origin (the mother) disappears from the child's reality – the third space of potential new meaning and becoming requires the original 'other' to remain present. This is an important notion for the realities of transition revealed in the narrative data of this study, where the students oscillate between their in-groups and third spaces of experiences in-between groups.

Their transitionality did not imply or demand a rejection of or dissipating in-groups, but instead required the realities of racial binary and hierarchy to build a third space of identity and knowledge. As I will show, this defines their transitionality, which established the foundation for these students' achievements as leaders for reconciliation and change.

Bhabha's and Winnicott's concepts of post-colonial in-betweenness, transitional phenomena and potential third spaces are thus useful to this study in making sense of the ambivalent identities the students constructed over time. As conceptual landscapes, in-betweenness and transitionality enable a deeper analysis of the seemingly cosmopolitan cultural performances of especially the black students, but also for the white students in their struggle with powerful in-group identities. However, it is the notion of a third space that in particular offers a rich analysis of the student leaders' experiences.

The Winnicottean development of the concept of third space highlights the role of imagination and the symbolic in the process of transition (Praglin, 2006, p. 4). The transitional space is one of imagination where the child creates new worlds beyond the boundaries of current reality, while interacting with objects for their symbolic value, such as attachment to a blanket that symbolically represents the transition from the caring presence of her mother. These notions indicate the artistic and creative processes akin to transitional space.

The particular nuances of the concept of transitionality are useful in making sense of the counter-cultural capacity of the student leaders to design new spaces for reconciliation and build actual projects of togetherness in their post-Reitz world. However, what these concepts do not sufficiently engage is an analysis of the processes of change that moved the students

from strict hierarchies to the creative third space of in-betweenness. While in-group anxieties, racial hierarchies and scapegoating directed their reproduction of ignorance, what were the transitional phenomena that precipitated their shift to in-betweenness?

Furthermore, while in-betweenness addresses the existential notion of whom the students are, which is the ontological, the concepts as developed here do not make sense of the stability of the cultural and political position of identity and knowledge revealed in the data as distinctive identity of the student leaders. Their in-betweenness translates to new knowledge and different performances from a third space of engagement – a process of change that offers a further area of analysis of the data.

4.5 Nearness: entanglements and change

Contact between in-groups and out-groups do not guarantee reconciliation and togetherness. Conditions of equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals, and support by social and institutional authorities (Allport, 1954) are shown to reduce prejudice in different ways, but do not guarantee the disruption of the phenomenon of binary identities and colonial-type hierarchies between black and white.

Reitz is a powerful reminder that contact conversely may increase prejudice and engender violent conflict, and similarly the post-Reitz interventions offer possible new theories of change that move in- and out-groups from racial distance to racial togetherness.

Dealing with the intimate proximities, 'the entanglements' of black and white in South African communities, homes and schools and on campus, Jansen (2016) builds a theory of 'nearness' to name and describe a theory of change beyond contact. Closeness, he shows, is not the exception, but the rule. Intimacies constructed in the closeness of lives in the hierarchies of farm owner and farm worker, of white master and black domestic, of white mother churches and black sister churches and the economies of white privilege and black poverty. These intimacies were powerfully illustrated in the Reitz incident. Jansen locates campus change in the process of working with such intimate knowledge to achieve nearness between black and white – knowledge that remains silent and hidden in the intergenerational transfer of racial binaries and hierarchies, and that must be interrupted to lead change and achieve reconciliation. As a theory of change, 'nearness' refers to the project in relationships of real people, not representatives, of in- and out-groups who recognise the intimate

knowledge between them, and shift from the strategic application of intimacy for resolution of conflict to building nearness to achieve reconciliation and deep change on divided campuses. Racial distance must be overcome with nearness.

At the heart of nearness as theory of change, is the distinction between intimacy and nearness, which Jansen (2016, p. 134) defines as follows:

> "I want to make a distinction between intimacy, as physical proximity, and nearness as something much deeper, more personal and surpassing everyday human contact. Intimacy represents physical proximity, nearness, and spiritual closeness. Intimacy offers tolerance, nearness and embrace. Intimacy resolves an immediate problem; nearness seeks long-term relationships. Intimacy is tactical, a head calculation; nearness is binding, a heart commitment. Intimacy is transactional; nearness is unconditional. Intimacy sets spatial limits to relationships; nearness has no boundaries."

Nearness is a project of change leadership that people must achieve; firstly as a performance of *courage* to step beyond the troubled knowledge of racial distance; secondly, as a performance of trust that others will hold and achieve nearness; thirdly, as a performance *beyond physical proximity*, but to really see and care about each person beyond the strictures of hierarchy; and lastly a performance in *communion* that open the intimate spaces of home and family as spaces for togetherness for black and white – the 'break bread' together (Jansen, 2016, p. 130).

Nearness also mediates a theory of action in change leadership, which Jansen describes as the commitments of campus leaders for reconciliation to working with all constituencies, building simple, strong and consistent messages and carefully designing co-curriculums for student learning. Change leaders make visible current exemplars of interracial solidarity and friendship, model what they want, build change with resources already available among students and convey a sense of their own brokenness. Such leaders must know when to move on, build allies of interracial solidarity, determine what is common to student aspirations and do not mislead themselves about their own authority. Nearness requires of leaders to give up power more than using it, to communicate the messiness of change, create opportunities for nearness and remain surprised by joy despite the demands in a struggle for change (Jansen, 2016, p. 217).

Jansen's theory of change (2016, p. 142), amongst others, also draws on Miroslav Volf's theory of embrace to show the reality of constant movement between the intimacies of in-groups and the nearness with out-groups at the heart of this theory of change.

4.6 Embrace: mutuality and change

Volf (1996) deals with the movement between belonging and distance in cultural identities, arguing that these opposite positionalities depend on one another, as quoted by Jansen (2016, p. 143) arguing that, "Both distance and belonging are essential. Belonging without distance destroys … But distance without belonging isolates … Distance from a culture must never degenerate into flight from that culture but must be a way of living in that culture."

Volf introduces reconciliation as a theory of change to resolve the problem of exclusion of 'the other' in how people, groups and societies deal with the reality of difference among cultures. Drawing on the theological notion of salvation through reconciliation with God, he argues for 'embrace' as an ontological and epistemological solution to 'exclusion' – embrace as the human performance that counters the fear and distance among people caught in the binaries and hierarchies of exclusion. For Volf, ethnic cleansing was the most powerful example (1996, p. 57). The projects and performances firstly of *differentiation*, which separates what is different and bind together what is similar, define exclusion. Secondly, exclusion grows with projects and performances that *distance* a group from the different other and then reconfigure this new world of exclusion as definitive. *Judgement* follows distance as the third layer of projects and performances employed by exclusion to maintain its world (Volf, 1996, p. 67).

Embrace counters exclusion with the acts of re-naming and re-making the world and its people – renaming those things exclusion defined as evil – namely difference – as good and remaking as good those people considered evil in the world of exclusion. This is the theory of change in the 'embrace of the other', namely to counter the knowledge, cultures, identities and performances that maintain 'the other' as distanced with a sense of self and the other that rejoices in difference. Herein the theory of 'embrace' draws on the Christian theological themes of *mutuality* in the self-giving love of the Trinity, the outstretched arms of an innocent (scapegoated) Christ as sacrifice for the sins of the 'godless' and the open arms of the Father that receives and embraces 'the prodigal son' (Volf, 1996, p. 29).

Volf outlines four ‘acts’ or performances in the practice of embrace, namely firstly the act of ‘opening the arms’, which refers to action that creates space for and invites the other to come close. Next follows the act of ‘waiting’, which refers to the desire for mutuality, for the other to enter a shared space with equal intent and commitment.

The act of ‘closing the arms’ follows as a third movement, which refers to holding one another in the embrace of reconciliation as a performance of *reciprocity*, followed by the fourth act of ‘opening the arms again’ to let go, a performance to recognise and celebrate the uniqueness of difference.

Contrary to exclusion, which seeks distanced difference and sameness in belonging, embrace values difference and steps back to again embrace – a dialectical movement in between the intertwined positionalities of belonging and distance in cultural identities.

However, embrace, as theory of change and performance of reconciliation require not only the intentionality and authenticity of the perpetrator in repentance and the forgiveness and openness for radical change of the victim. This is a critical concept in this theory of change, since the practice of embrace requires of both the perpetrator and the victim to undergo radical change (Volf, 1996, p. 114). This not only implies a resolution of the conflict of exclusion and reconciliation between the cultural opposites, but also a radical transformation of the social structure of binaries and hierarchies at play in the background of their worlds.

It is an important concept for my research, as it deals with the questions regarding black and white complicity in maintaining the racial hierarchies and distance revealed in the life narratives of the students. The notion challenges the perspective that only the binaries of victimhood – of black trauma and forgiveness and white guilt, shame and apology, define the practice of racial reconciliation. The reality of embrace as an intentional project and performance of the post-Reitz interventions questions this definition of reconciliation, which reveals possible new perspectives on students’ leadership for change. Simply put, much of their initiatives for change are reminiscent of the radical transformation of binaries Volf’s theory of change define as the end goal of reconciliation through embrace – disrupting those social structures that precipitate the distance of belonging and exclusion in the lives of the students. Embrace as theory of change draws attention to the space in-between, the third space within an embrace, where new knowledge and identities emerge, while constructing a praxis of reconciliation that build bridges across the established boundaries of racial hierarchies.

What theories of embrace cannot provide, however, is insight into the subjective world of human beings – student leaders in this case – as they struggle to exist between their assigned identities (black, white) and their aspirational identities as agents of reconciliation, their position of in-betweenness.

As this study will show, it is the discovery of in-betweenness as a resource in leading for change that helps the students to trace their stories of becoming bridgebuilders with bridge-building knowledge.

4.7 Bridge-building: shared spaces for change

While Dewey (2009 [1922]) already employed bridge-building as metaphor to discuss the philosophy of education, Christa Boske (2012) more recently argues for 'bridging' as leadership approach in social justice education.

She considers bridge-building in educational leadership the practice of building shared spaces and understandings between schools and communities, between diverse learners and teachers and between ideas. It attempts to position schools as open spaces that invite new thinking and action aimed at serving each individual in that collective and as public project to give voice to those silenced in their community (Boske, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c).

The focus of bridge-building is on the empowerment of the voiceless within a collective, which makes bridge-building a moral commitment – it sees people at the margins and finds its purpose in transforming the subaltern liminality of silenced voices. It opens spaces to share resources, power and reflection, but with the requirements of action for change.

The notion that bridge-building consists of processes of *deconstructing and reconstructing* the world in successive and continuous cycles of reflection and action is central to bridge-building – action to reform, transform and review (Boske, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). In this sense, bridging is understood as a theory of action that moves collectives from reflecting on change to action that achieves it.

The bridging is not the transformation itself, but is the process that leads to the transformation of knowledge and structure to place the most vulnerable at the heart of the community.

This is a critical aspect of the concept, since bridge-building, in particular, engages organisational leaders in the project for change, which Robert Quinn (2004) describes as the first main objective of bridge-building within organisations. Bridgebuilders must lead deep change by first transforming their sense of self and knowledge to change and then co-construct a new language of togetherness to guide the collective to transform itself and its members – a 'fundamental state' of leadership (Quinn, 2004).

The notion of co-creation or *co-authoring* is a second critical concept in bridging, which represents the collaborative purpose of bridgebuilders to imagine new possibilities and together work to achieve it.

Bridge building then is a process of collective meaning making to create synergies for action (Boske, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). Very similar to the concepts of nearness and embrace, bridging requires change leaders to build trust and empathy among various groups, empower diverse others to participate in dialogue, and find shared purposes, as well as to create spaces and opportunity to nurture a sense of community (Sharpe, 2016).

Sharpe (2016) shows that leaders need to engage with these performances and projects in their roles as change agents, by drawing on complexity, cross-cultural competence and value-centric theories of leadership. A collective, such as a school, should take the initiative to become a bridge for the voiceless and the wider community as its purpose and do so by constructing bridging values, cultures and identities as the foundation of a unique in-group knowledge and identity.

When it comes to concepts of change – the notions of third spaces of togetherness – leaders who co-author change with others and the methodology of de- and re-construction are useful to my research as a descriptive framework for these students' performances in leading change. Bridge-building as a concept offers an opportunity to refine our understanding of bridge leadership as methodology of change.

However, current definitions of the concept do not sufficiently address the ontological and epistemological aspects of bridge-building as a theory of change. These aspects are, however, important in building this theory of change based on the shifts in knowledge and identity among the students in this study.

Their lives of these student leaders show that their praxis of change leadership develops not firstly as a strategic method to achieve morally just outcomes, but rather originates from a sense of self (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) of the world that stands in-between the opposites that are established by binaries.

4.6 Conclusion: delineating the core concepts

The master themes (see Table 3) of this study emerged from the concurrent and iterative processes of narrative analysis of the student leaders' stories of change and reviews of relevant fields of inquiry to find conceptual resources for interpretation.

Several sub-themes emerged, which were refined to three master themes, namely themes of transition, themes of in-betweenness, and themes of ignorance. The master theme of *transition* includes the notions of "struggle", "transitivity", "conscientisation" and "praxis". The master theme of *in-betweenness* includes the notions of "in-betweenness", "ambiguity", "liminality", "nearness" and "embrace". The master theme of *ignorance* includes the notions of "naiveté", "reticence", "reproduction", "hierarchy" and "reprisal".

However, in order to develop a framework of concepts to make sense of the findings of the study, I combined the various concepts as drawn from various fields and theories to resemble a unique topography of meaning wherein I was able to construct the emerging theories of change of this research. As the scheme below shows (Figure 2), the Freirean concepts of struggle, humanisation, conscientization and praxis provide a conceptual foundation that underpins the progression of themes that corresponds to the progression of critical incidents in the life narratives of the four students (see Table 1, Chapter 10).

For this reason I delineate *human becoming* as the first core concept for my framework to interpret the findings of the analysis of the student leaders' biographies (see vertical axis, Figure 2 below). However, the struggle I analyse in this study through the voices of the four student leaders is one of social contact, as it emerges from the interplay between their individual struggles with race and the racial struggle of in-groups and out-groups, of the social hierarchies, they are a part of.

Theories of *social contact* provide the second core concept of my framework for analysis. As my analysis of the life narratives (Chapter 10) will show, the struggle that emerges in the student leaders' lives is not a struggle between black and white, but rather the struggle

between two different and conflicting ways of knowing, being and doing. It is the struggle between ignorance and transitionality, between racial distance and racial in-betweenness, and between racial naiveté and building bridges.

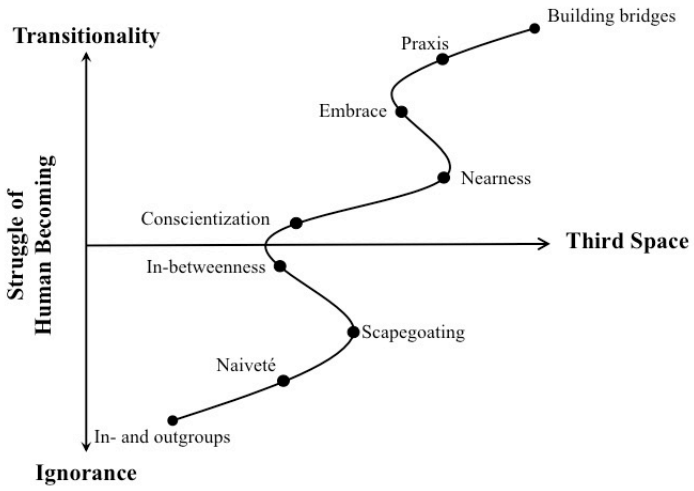
For this reason, I delineate the epistemologies of *ignorance* and of *transitionality* as the third and fourth core concepts of an interpretative framework for this study. The distances between in-group and out-groups, and the naiveté and scapegoating that sustain it underpin ignorance. The alternative spaces and symbolic imagination that underpin post-colonial identity and the transitional phenomena of psycho-development provide for the third space of meaning that underpins transitionality.

Although the changes in the student leaders' lives emerge as a messy process that oscillate between certainty and doubt, progress and relapse, a progressive forward movement also emerged from naiveté to critical awareness.

Two categories of experiences played a critical role to strengthen new identities of in-betweenness and new knowledge of racial togetherness: namely experiences that invited alternative identities and encounters that disrupted distances. The two groups of experience revealed these different types of experience as important mediators of new knowledge and identity. For this reason I delineate *nearness* and *embrace* as the fifth and sixth core concepts of the framework of the study.

I delineate *building bridges* as the final core concept of my framework of analysis. It provides the methodological extension of the ontological notions of becoming and in-betweenness, and the describes the types of praxis relevant for this study on reconciliation. As the life narratives will show, although the student leaders were broadly engaged in reconciliation, they considered their work to lead change as a project to build new realities, more so than bringing warring parties together to make peace. Much more than only peace, they were focused on a third space to design novel ways of knowing, being and doing.

Figure 2: Conceptual framework



As a landscape of meaning, each of the concepts offers a unique perspective on the lives of the students' leaders. For itself, this could suffice as the only vantage point from which to explore their rich narratives of reconciliation and change; each a part of the topography of the data that would yield fertile descriptions of lived experience in contexts of change.

However, this is not where the voices of the students directed this study. Rather, as co-readers and writers of their narratives, the study participants wanted the researcher and his analysis to join them in their journeys with racial knowledge and identity – to see as much as they could offer of the picture of their lives and then reflect on their stories of change.

The biographies of change that follow (chapters 5-9) thus introduce and describe the lives of the students at the heart the struggle for change in the post-Reitz world of the University of the Free State.

PART II
STORIES OF CHANGE

CHAPTER 5
POST-REITZ INTERVENTIONS (2007-2012)

Reitz followed on from and protested against the intentional work of the university pertaining to racial integration in residences. More specifically, the Reitz video was protesting against a new policy to increase racial diversity through de-segregation of campus residences that the university adopted in 2007. The post-Reitz interventions for change focused largely on the process being put in place to implement this policy for desegregated residences and succeed in its rollout. For this reason, the institutional adoption of the new policy and the official positioning of the post-Reitz interventions as measures to ensure its implementation sets the institutional context for reading the students' experiences of change on campus. Accordingly, this chapter takes as its point of departure the programme the university launched in 2007 to consult students regarding the new policy. In outlining the post-Reitz events, it then takes the institutional interventions as the context for the student leaders' stories of change.

The post-Reitz interventions that feature prominently in the four life narratives are the processes set in place to adopt the new policy for diversity in residences; the student dialogue programmes of the iGubu Residence Diversity Project; racially diverse student placements in residences; the appointment of new university leaders; and the interventions focused on the redesign and transformation of student leadership development, and student governance and student life on campus (see below Table 2, Timeline of Reitz interventions and student biographies).

5.1 A new policy and role for residences (2007)

The university council had adopted the new policy by June 2007 with an intention to "overcome the racial divides of the past and equip students in residences with the knowledge and skills to understand people from other cultures".[36] The university wanted to "establish a new model of residence life in which students would voluntarily embrace diversity and learn about diversity so as to add value to their educational experience in a residence".[37] However, Verschoor (2015) traces the university's efforts for racial integration of the residences back to the first protest march for access to accommodation by black students in 1989, after which two residences were opened for all races.

[36] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=672. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[37] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=672. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.

Table 2: Timeline of Reitz and student biographies

University of the Free State and Reitz		Four student leaders
Post-graduate black students accepted	1978	
Undergraduate black students accepted	1990	
Bi-lingual language policy (English and Afrikaans)	1993	
Racial violence in campus clashes	1996	
Racially segregated residences allowed on campus	1997	
	2001	Thabelo starts high school
Mandela accepts honorary degree in recognition of campus transformation	2002	Dawie starts high school
	2003	Aletta starts high school
	2004	Lerato starts high school
Black students protest institutional racism	2005	
	2006	Thabelo arrives on campus
New policy to increase diversity in residences	2007	Dawie arrives on campus
		Thabelo experiences a first turn event in an intimate friendship with a white student leader
Violent protest by student residences	2008	Aletta arrives on campus
Reitz incident		
Reitz Residence Closed		
Reitz Four expelled and criminally charged		
Rector resigns		
iGubu Residence Diversity and reconciliation project		Thabelo, Dawie and Aletta elected as student leaders
New student leaders training		
First black Rector appointed	2009	Lerato arrives on campus
		Lerato experiences a first turn event as she gains belonging in her white residence
Reitz Reconciliation process launched		Lerato elected a student leader
		Dawie experiences a first turn event in the caring leadership of new university leaders
		Aletta experiences a first turn event as she encounters and befriends black student leaders
Racially diverse residence placements		
New Dean of Students appointed	2010	Thabelo experiences a second turn event when he is suspended for initiating white students
First black president of the student council elected		Lerato elected as first black Prime of her residence
		Aletta experiences a second turn event as the new Rector declares his trust in her leadership
Black student protest intervarsity		Dawie and Aletta move to black residences
Student Council suspended		
Interim Student Council (ISC)	2011	Lerato experiences a second turn event when mentored by the black woman chairing the ISC
Broad Student Transformation Forum (BSTF)		Aletta chairs the BSTF
		Dawie changes the PO10SEE leadership program
Reitz workers and students reconcile		Dawie experiences a second turn event as he discovers unintended complicity
New Student Constitution for student governance adopted		
Student life colleges introduced	2012	Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato join this research and participant interviews completed

Over the course of two decades following the introduction of racially integrated residences, a troubled process followed, oscillating between greater or lesser progress with racial integration, and punctuated by compromises designed to limit violent racial conflict. The one constant variable in this conflict was the Reitz residence, as would also prove to be the case going forward.

The new policy[38] at the time represented the most recent intervention of the university regarding racial integration in campus residences. In setting the context for its adoption, the policy outlines the trajectory of racial integration in residences, explaining the development of the change process introduced a decade earlier in 1997.

However, in this first phase of campus transformation "the consensus outcome of deliberations [reached] by black and white students [determined that residence placements] was based on the principle of voluntary association." The 1997/98-policy allowed residences to directly recruit, select and place 70% of new students, leaving 30% under direct management control. The policy also did not impose diversity requirements for residence placements, an omission that combined with the student control of placements to allow a "gradual gravitation to residences that are mainly black or mainly white". Effectively this allowed for "two campuses – one white and one black, separated in the classrooms and in the residences".[39] At the time, it seemed that students, and not management, were in control of the process of change in residences – a situation explained the new policy as a compromise arrangement to restore peace on campus following aggravated racial violence among students prior to 1997.

The new policy reports a consultation process with various stakeholders for its development from March to May 2007, including residence heads, the SRC, residence chairpersons and student and alumni organisations. Stakeholders received a draft policy document for written comment and residence students were requested through their representatives to consult with their parents and submit suggestions.[40] The new policy introduced major shifts in the management of residence placements. It required all first-year placements to achieve a minimum "diversity level" of 30%, i.e. 30% black or white first years in majority either white or black residences.

[38] Increasing diversity in UFS main campus residences: A new policy and role for residences. See http://www.ufs.ac.za/about-the-ufs/governance/policy-documents. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[39] Increasing diversity in UFS main campus residences: A new policy and role for residences, pp. 1.
[40] Increasing diversity in UFS main campus residences: A new policy and role for residences, pp. 3.

However, more critically, the new policy increased the control of the university management over placements, allowing residences to place only 50% and instructing the university's accommodation services to use the remaining placements to achieve sufficient diversity in any particular residence unable to meet the 30% target on its own.[41]

Scheduled for implementation in 2008, during the rest of 2007, students protested the new policy in various ways, as witnessed most prominently in two incidents related in the life narratives of participants to this study – the protest action by student leaders to contest non-consultation by management during the first weeks of 2008 and the Reitz-video to protest racial integration, which was exposed the week after the 2008 consultation, but had already been produced in 2007.

The new policy serves as the first major critical incident in the life narratives of the study and offered the foundation for the first formal post-Reitz intervention of the university, namely the appointment of external consultants to assist in the implementation of the policy.

5.2 IGUBU Residence Diversity Project (2008-2010)

On the instruction of the university council, the management by June 2008 appointed the iGubu Leadership Agency (iGubu) as external consultants to assist with the implementation of the new residence integration policy.[42] iGubu was tasked with assisting the university in understanding and identifying the obstacles to the implementation of the new policy, drawing up proposals to enhance and successfully implement the integration policy and doing so in such a way as to ensure successful racial integration in campus residences.

The university also appointed other consulting agencies to assist in its process of institutional transformation with a focus on strategic communication and branding. With the university, iGubu designed and introduced a phased intervention programme, named the Residence Diversity Project (RDP).[43]

In the first phase, from June to December 2008, iGubu identified obstacles related to the implementation of the residence diversity policy and introduced interventions to build trust and mediate racial conflict among students in residences.

[41] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=672. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[42] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1003. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[43] Phase C Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 4.

Using qualitative research designs, iGubu conducted depth-interviews to analyse obstacles to the policy and simultaneously introduced a series of dialogue meetings to debrief students and build trust. In its trust-building programme iGubu focused on story-telling with students sharing their life experiences with one another in safe spaces. The discussions also focused on shared values, with students outlining those values they considered critical to a new campus culture.[44] The dialogue forums specifically engaged student leaders in residences, political organisations and student associations to build a broad foundation for reconciliation.

Drawing on 120 interviews with students and staff, the Phase A research study found that existing residence cultures; communication with management; lack of shared vision; and insufficient capacity development were the major difficulties facing the university in its work for racial integration.[45]

Maintaining its focus on trust building and change ownership, iGubu in the second phase of the project (2009) worked with residences to design and pilot solutions. Actual situations dealing with racial integration and diversity in residences were used as case studies, with students and iGubu together designing and implementing pilot programmes as solutions in any particular residence. Those pilot projects that were succeeding well in solving difficulties faced by residences in the process of racial integration were included in the final list of recommendations for interventions for change. Good practices in higher education internationally and locally were explored to determine correct responses to systemic challenges.

Benchmarking was based on the consideration of management practices at institutions abroad, as well as at local institutions similar in character to the UFS.[46] Through the collaborative process of design and testing, while continuing with programmes for dialogue with residences, the project arrived at a series of recommendations, chief among which was for the introduction of a 50% target for diversity placements, rather than the 30% set by the new policy. Other key recommendations included full control of placements by the university, the alignment of room placements in residences with diversity objectives and an overhaul of student and staff development to focus on value-driven leadership.[47]

[44] Phase A Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 33.
[45] Phase C Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 5.
[46] Phase C Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 6.
[47] Phase C Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 6.

The third phase of the project (2010) focused on capacity development for change leadership among students and staff in residences. iGubu assisted in the overhaul of leadership development programmes for student representatives, while introducing professional staff development programmes to assist staff in the implementation of change interventions in housing environments.[48] The staff development programmes made use of skills audits and professional coaching and training workshops to empower residence staff as change leaders for the post-Reitz interventions..

The RDP succeeded in transferring to students a sense of ownership of the change process and a creating a sense of professional investment in their role as change leaders among staff. More importantly, the project established a dialogic culture of engagement to replace the adversarial styles of negotiation that had formerly determined students' response to the diversity policy. The RDP engaged the lived experience of students and staff in residences, and assisted staff and student leaders to fulfil their roles as co-authors of the process of change – placements for diversity continued throughout, so that leaders needed to learn in practice.

5.3 New approach to racially diverse placements (2009-2010)

At the end of the first phase of the RDP, iGubu tabled preliminary recommendations to university, which included, among others, the recommendation that the university continue the implementation of the new policy for diverse placements.[49] iGubu argued that the policy itself did not present a major obstacle to racial integration, but that further recommendations would follow after the second phase of the RDP.

This meant that while iGubu in 2009 recommended a shift in the diversity target of the policy from 30% to 50%, which proposal was adopted by the university, the placements of students in support of racial integration according to the new policy continued as planned from 2008. The accommodation services of the university continued its implementation based on the 2007 policy and allocated new student places in order to achieve the 30% target set by the policy.

[48] Phase C Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 7.
[49] Phase A Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 30.

Within two years, by 2011, more than half of the campus residences achieved and maintained a 50:50 ratio of black and white first year students.[50] The racially diverse placements in residences represented a critical incident in the life narratives of participants for two particular reasons. On the one hand, it presented first year students with a greater number of intentionally planned opportunities for contact among blacks and whites in residence and in student life. On the other hand, it caused residence heads and committees to seek solutions to practical problems they faced with increased racial diversity. For these reasons, the policy influenced first years and the student committees of campus residences most.

An important development that followed the continuation of racially diverse placements was the introduction of additional seats to residence committees to build racially diverse student representation. The programme was introduced as part of the collaborative second phase of the RDP to pilot permanent solutions in support of racial integration and change.[51]

For this reason, the programme not only provided for additional committee seats, but also designed new portfolios held by new members, such as the office for Strategy and Values – a portfolio tasked with reviewing the institutional culture of residents and building a value-driven culture among them.

However, as related in the life narratives of participants, the appointment of additional members for racial representivity caused much difficulty for student elections in residences as a result of the sense of racial bias in elections that the arrangement implied. Student leaders argued against its continuation and the project for additional members was discontinued, while retaining the new portfolios that focused on building different residence cultures, something that students supported.

The continuation of placement procedures of the new policy and the rollout to all residences of those interventions successfully piloted in 2009 increased the pace of racial integration and cultural change in residence. As the RDP, as coordinating programme of the first post-Reitz-interventions, continued into its third phase of implementation and capacity development for change, new leadership took office at the top levels of the university, adding impetus to the process of change.

[50] Residence Diversity Project: Final Project Assessment, iGubu Agency, pp. 8
[51] Phase B Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 15.

5.4 New university leadership (2009-2010)

The Rector of the university and the Dean of Students, respectively, resigned and stepped down in the wake of Reitz. The following years, 2009 and 2010, a new Rector and Dean were appointed – representing another key incident of the post-Reitz interventions: namely new leadership to lead transformation.

In 2009, the university council appointed Professor Jonathan Jansen as the first black Rector and Vice-Chancellor in the 105-year history of the institution.

With the appointment, the council signalled its intent to pursue the objective of transformation in the interests of the entire university community.[52] In accepting the position, the new Rector indicated the need to bring academic staff, administrative staff, workers, and students, as well as the parent community, behind a compelling vision of transformation that could work in the interest of all members of the university community.

Professor Jansen also declared the need to rebuild trust and confidence among students and staff in the mission [for change] of the university.[53] Jansen was considered as a leading specialist in education, and the university valued his expertise in balancing the dual imperatives of reparation and reconciliation in higher education leadership practice.[54] The appointment of the first black Rector was met with uncertainty by students, but widely welcomed by the university community and beyond.

While the Rector's decisions to introduce a process of reconciliation, rather than continue the legal action against the Reitz students, garnered the most public attention and caused much debate among students, the life narratives of participants to the student show that his focus on building trust with and among students had the greatest impact on the process of change in residences. It was the fact that he was leading differently to his predecessors that led to a major critical incident of the post-Reitz interventions, according to what was related by the study participants to the new Dean of Students.

Appointed soon after, the university recruited the team leader of iGubu as its new Dean of students.

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[52] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1274 and http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/archive.aspx?news=1249&cat=1. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[53] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1274. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[54] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1274. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.

The new Dean was a specialist in youth development and engaged as consultant at different universities in student development programmes.[55] More importantly, he was 30 years younger and much closer to students in life experience than his predecessor was. He also was known for his work for reconciliation as a reverend of the Afrikaans, Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and during his term as Dean was ordained in a local congregation with the clerical gown of Dr Beyers Naudé, an anti-apartheid icon who resigned from the DRC during apartheid.[56]

In the first black Rector and a Dean from a much younger generation, both committed and experienced in reconciliation and transformation in different ways and in different constituencies in higher education, the university established another critical incident for the post-Reitz interventions.

However, while the life narratives of participants refer to these particular traits of reconciliation and transformation on the part of the new university leadership, it is rather the particular style of interaction with and engagement of students that participants show as most critical in their experience of change.

In their leadership for change, students found a clear vision for change, authentic partnerships with fellow students to co-author change, a sense of trust and real care in how students were engaged, as well as leaders that modelled interracial friendship in their own lives. In his book, *Leading for Change* (2016), professor Jansen outlines some of the strategies for leadership on divided campuses that together built a new foundation for co-leading change with students.

Amongst others, these included making visible existing exemplars of interracial solidarity, modelling what managers want in their own leadership choices, finding the creative resources that already existed among students to lead transformation, as well as conceding and conveying a sense of one's own brokenness (Jansen, 2016, p. 206-209).

Following the new approach set by the new university leadership, the programmes for student leadership development soon became the next important critical incident for the post-Reitz interventions.

[55] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1609. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[56] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2012/02/29/VB/8/psrudi.html. Retrieved on 05/12/2015.

5.5 Redesigned leadership development (2008-2011)

The redesign of student leadership development started as early as 2008 as part of the Residence Diversity Project (RDP) of the iGubu Agency.[57] The RDP process included a programme of dialogue forums to debrief students and mediate racial tensions. Focused mainly on recruiting participation from student committees, such as first year and residence executive committees, the dialogue programme achieved three goals simultaneously, namely to mediate the racial conflict on campus; provide additional data for analysis of obstacles to change; and rebuild trust among student leaders as foundation for change leadership. As outlined above, the dialogue forums focused on intimate story telling among students and the development of shared institutional values.

Drawing on the outcomes of the dialogue forums, in 2008, iGubu presented the training of the incumbent Student Representative Council (SRC) and residence executive committees with a particular focus on developing shared values and institutionally aligned vision and mission statements.[58]

In 2009, as part of the second phase of the RDP to pilot solutions to obstacles to change, iGubu also included the executive committees of student associations in the annual training of leaders – previously the university did not offer leadership development to association committees. iGubu also piloted a new preparatory development programme for candidate student leaders. Those students wanting to run for office were expected to attend discussion forums with the several speakers, including the new Rector, as preparation for serving as a student representative.

In addition to a redesign of the programme of preparation and training of student leaders for official representative roles, iGubu also redesigned the curriculum content of the PO10SEE-camp – then the only other recognised leadership development event on campus, annually organised by the SRC. Previously focused in general on experiential learning for leadership, the content of the programme now focused on stereotype reduction, storytelling and building shared values.[59]

[57] Phase A Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 37.
[58] Phase A Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 37.
[59] Phase B Progress Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 14.

A third major focus in the redesign of student leadership development was the guidance provided to student leaders for the purpose of redesigning their own programmes for planning and development, organised independently from the university. Residence committees annually would arrange an event during the end-year break for strategic planning, while the SRC annually arranged its 'Primes Liaison Tour' for all chairpersons.[60] As part of the intervention to redesign leadership development, iGubu assisted residences in planning these events, and with the SRC redesigned the content of the annual liaison tour.

In the life narratives of participants the newly designed 'Primes'-tour represents a critical incident as exemplar of redesigned leadership development. Different to previous years, the programme now focused intentionally on discussing the apartheid-past of South Africa and visiting the Apartheid Museum, the Constitutional Court and Freedom Park in Johannesburg.

The dialogue programmes of the RDP and the redesigned programmes for student leadership development for the first time offered students opportunities to discuss issues of change and social justice openly, and to do so with fellow students from a different racial group.

The sustained focus of the post-Reitz interventions on building trust and shared values beyond race among student leaders inevitably would bring in its wake conflict along with the change in student politics, as well as galvanizing this change.

5.6 Redesigned student governance (2010-2011)

The nature of campus politics, known for its racially divisive impact, especially during elections of the SRC, and the role of political parties in student governance were listed as obstacles to racial integration.[61]

For this reason, iGubu directly engaged the political parties as a particular stakeholder group in the RDP in 2008, with political parties allowing for changes in their programmes of action, such as avoiding racialised messages in election campaigns in 2009.

In 2009, the first black SRC-President, Mr Moses Masitha, was elected.[62]

[60] The 'Primes Liaison Tour' was a tour by bus during the summer break for the Primes (chairpersons of residences) to other universities to interact (liaise) with chairpersons of residences there, as a way of building unity among Primes and collegiality with other institutions.
[61] Phase A Report, iGubu Agency, pp. 23.

His election was read as a sign of transformation and popularly compared to the election of Mr Barack Obama as the first black president of the USA, as was also the case with a participant in the study elected as first black chairperson of a white residence.

However, while the increasing number of racially diverse student leaders was a sign of change, the racialised nature of politics in student governance had not yet shifted, but continued its racially divisive impact among students. This changed in 2010, when the university suspended student governance and introduced a programme to redesign the SRC constitution following racially motivated campus disruptions by a political party campaigning for the SRC-elections.[63] Calling on students to redesign student governance for a new campus community marked by new values, the university established a Broad Student Transformation Forum (BSTF) for this purpose.[64] Withdrawing from the Forum in its own capacity, the university management allowed student constituencies to design what governance model they considered suitable for a transformed university. Students nominated an Interim Student Committee (ISC) to represent student interests in university management during the deliberations of the BSTF.[65]

The BSTF made use of study groups to benchmark good practices in student governance at other South African and international universities and adopted a new SRC Constitution following a yearlong programme of consultation with students on campus [66] Most significantly, the new constitution now allowed independent candidates to contest elections and introduced a series of ex officio seats for diverse student constituencies, such as for international and postgraduate students and for a council of student associations.[67] More stringent eligibility requirements were also introduced.

This process of change met with severe contestation from political parties, most notably in the (unsuccessful) legal action against the new SRC constitution by SASCO, one of the campus political associations.[68] In the face of wide-ranging criticism that the university had disallowed freedom of political engagement, the university made public its formal support for the outcomes of the BSTF.

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[62] See http://mg.co.za/article/2009-08-29-turning-the-tide. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[63] See http://mg.co.za/article/2010-08-13-kovsies-vs-pukke-ufs-sasco. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[64] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1824. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[65] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1824. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[66] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=2051. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[67] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=2051. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[68] See http://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-16-ufs-students-face-off-over-src-election. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.

The university declared its view that the new constitution enabled vibrant student politics and allowed all diverse student constituencies to participate actively in student governance.[69]

The first elections under the new SRC-constitution achieved a racially diverse representative council (55% black and 45% white, 60% female and 40% male) and maintained one of the highest voter turnout percentages in student elections (31%) of all South African campuses.

The redesign of student governance established the possibility of campus politics beyond narrow and race-based party-politics and represented a major critical incident of the post-Reitz interventions in the life narratives of study participants. However, the transformation of student governance also reflected the changes taking place in student life in general.

5.7 Redesigned student life (2010-2012)

Student life and culture at a provincial university like UFS historically consisted of and focused on residences, with campus and local sport and cultural leagues drew on residences, rather on student associations in general, for teams to compete and participate in student programmes. This meant that, even though no more than 15% of the student populations were engaged through residences, residence life to a large extent determined the content and 'feel' of campus student life. Changes to general student life therefore implied changes also to the programme of residence life, thus establishing new designs in student life as a major critical incident in the post-Reitz interventions for change. In addition to the redesign of student governance as a critical aspect of student life, post-Reitz interventions focused for the most part on the redesign of the student orientation programmes; of arts and culture activities, and student media programmes. The most prominent instances of change that are reflected in participant life narratives include the redesign of the first years' welcoming programme, the campus leagues for a Capella groups and the establishment of new off-campus residences.

In 2011, the university piloted the Gateway First Years' College as redesigned welcoming programme for new students.[70] Whereas residences historically were left to design their own welcoming programmes, often in the form of hazing, the Gateway College was centrally coordinated with strict rules against initiation rituals, and designed and implemented in partnership with faculties and all campus stakeholders.

[69] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=2081. Retrieved on 08/17/2017.
[70] Student Affairs Report: HESA survey on transformation, 2014, pp. 1.

The College Programme introduces students to the requirements for student success, a sense of belonging to and shared identity with the university as knowledge community and to institutional values of and commitments to academic excellence and reconciliation.

The programme effectively established a first-year campus, running for two weeks prior to the commencement of the academic year.[71] It grouped students from different residences into Colleges, mixing male and female, as well as black and white students, while also integrating off-campus students in College groups. In addition to the foundational first year College programme, the Gateway included a Parent/Guardian College programme taking place in the year prior to registration; first year refresher programmes during the year; and orientation programmes for international and post-graduate students.[72]

The Gateway College interrupted the established cultures of residences by suspending the distances between residences historically segregated by race and gender, and building combined programmes to grow human rights cultures. The most established programmes in student life also included campus competitions for a Capella song groups, named *Stagedoor*, and for fundraising for student community service, named *Kovsies*[73] *Rag.* All residences fiercely competed for first place, but the white residences always won. This left former black residences to distrust the programmes. As part of the post-Reitz redesign of student life, these competitions were redesigned to enable all residences with unique and diverse students to compete on equal footing. Soon black residences would win top honours in all programmes. However, it was the apex event for the arts and culture programme, the annual *Kovsies Extravaganza,* which would be the most critical signal of change. The theatre production included national and international guests performing with students from residences. This was historically not generally supported by black students. As from 2010, the showpiece included performances by all residences and artists preferred by black and white alike.[74]

An important development in the redesign of student life was the establishment of two additional off-campus residences for commuter students, with which two of the study participants were directly involved.

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[71] Student Affairs Report: HESA survey on transformation, 2014, pp. 1.
[72] Student Affairs Report: HESA survey on transformation, 2014, pp. 1.
[73] Kovsies is the affectionate name used by the university community to refer to the University of the Free State. It comes from the acronyms for the names of the colleges the former Afrikaans universities originated from, in this case the 'Kollege van die Oranje Vrystaat' – College of the Orange Free State, with the acronym KOV, which became KOV-sies (-sies is an Afrikaans word form that shows endearment).
[74] Student Affairs Annual Report 2011, pp. 5.

Noting the need to increase opportunities for students residing off-campus, the SRC and residence leaders together established two additional associations to cater for commuter students.[75]

This was a significant development, as the new residences wanted to build racially integrated communities founded on the new values of a university that promoted diversity – an important indicator of the ownership for change located among students.

Whereas the post-Reitz interventions as extraordinary projects for change concluded at the end of 2010, the implementation of those change programmes continued and were successfully piloted during the Residence Diversity Project (RDP) as part of the formal process of institutional transformation in Student Affairs.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has recounted those areas of intervention the study participants most associated with the experience of change on campus following the Reitz trauma. While not attempting to provide an exhaustive list or description of interventions, this chapter has situated the student leaders' experiences of change on campus within the broader structure of the campus programme for change.

This strengthens the validity of the data as it confirms the factuality of the critical events the participants related in the interviews and from which their life narratives as stories of change were drafted. More importantly, the post-Reitz interventions provide the 'stories of change' (Part II) of the dissertation with the performative setting that brings the diverse incidents and experiences of four very different people together. It sets a context for change on campus that shows that while each participant experienced different moments as impactful, change on campus was intentional, not simply chance happenings – a key requirement to the realisation of the 'diversity's promise for higher education' (Smith, 2015, 276).

Against the background of the intentional post-Reitz interventions as context for their experiences of the process of change on campus, the following chapters will introduce the lives of Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato prior to, during, and following Reitz.

[75] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2012/02/07/VB/4/kampus4-StoryC.html. Retrieved on 05/12/15.

CHAPTER 6

THABELO'S STORY, A STRUGGLE WITH ANGER (2001-2012)

"It has to break somehow. I mean I got to a point where my belief that all people were the same got challenged; I was borderline racist, in the space of just a few months [on campus]. So I understand how [my parents] feel, but I also understand the fact that I came back from that; so I can't reasonably honestly just let my parents go on in life like that or see it rubbing off on my little brother."

Thabelo identifies as a male, Christian, black and Venda,[76] from a rural background, as well as privileged compared to the lives of campus friends from the Kasi (a colloquial reference to South African townships), though this was not always so.

Born in 1988, with his father a farmer and his mother a teacher Thabelo grew up in a small village in the northernmost and deep rural parts of the Limpopo Province. His whole family, including his grandfather who was a *sangoma*, a traditional healer, lived in a "*rondawel* – a hut, the size of an office" with no running water, electricity or sewerage plumbing and had to walk to a nearby river to bath.

He recalled a happy childhood and only became aware of the political violence of the time with the stories his mother told him – stories of police brutality. The most traumatic story was of the violent killing of a family acquaintance in a field nearby their home – white, military-type men in plain clothes dismembered their victim by pulling him apart between two vehicles. Not having witnessed the traumatic event himself, Thabelo later roamed the field searching for some sign. His mother often reminded him of another story, about a passenger in the taxi they were traveling in when he was two years old; that passenger was a police officer. Thabelo pointed at the police officer, saying, "They're going to shoot us."

These were the only references to white people in his early life, apart from noticing white people on television at some point and wondering why there were no such people living in his village. Some members of Thabelo's family were involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, even to the extent of incarceration on Robben Island, the infamous political prison off the cost of Cape Town, where former President Nelson Mandela also was imprisoned.

[76] Vhavenda is historically recognised as an ethnic-cultural 'nation' in Southern Africa, its territories established as an 'independent' homeland under apartheid and incorporated to the Limpopo Province under the new South African Constitution, with Tshivenda recognised as official language in its founding provisions. See Mafukata, M.A. (2015) Mandevu in *Journal of Art History*, Vol. 4:1, 14-26.

Thabelo also clearly remembered the television broadcast of the funeral of another hero of the liberation struggle, Chris Hani, assassinated in 1993; his most vivid memory of the event was that of a dove that flew under the coffin as the body was readied for the grave.[77] Thabelo was five years old at the time. It was only at primary school, which he started in 1994, that Thabelo became more aware of his social context and, specifically, poverty.

He was bullied early on and one day, on the playground, he accidentally ripped his trousers, with fellow learners laughing at him for not wearing underwear, which he had never owned. This was traumatic, but the experience also galvanised his own sense of agency and to this day, as then, he considers the incident a turning point in his life. The experience motivated him not to shy away from interaction, but rather to find alternatives. After this incident, he established new friendships with older kids at school, who accepted and respected him, and eventually became their leader. In his words, he went from "zero to hero", and he was eventually elected as Head Boy of the school. During this time, aged 12 (1999), he heard an interview with Malcolm X who asked, "Who made you hate yourself? Who told you, you were ugly? Who told you, you were inferior?" Thabelo understood these questions to say, "Who has the right to make you feel inferior?" He decided to think for himself.

Thabelo's teachers at the school were all white, while the students were racially diverse, with black, white and Indian learners. However, by 1998-2000, his final years at primary school, most of the white and Indian learners had left and the student body for the most part was black. At the time, he attached no racial meaning to the white and Indian kids leaving, or the racially opposite composition of the staff and student body. It was only later, after experiences of racism as a student at university, that he understood these events also as racial.

During his primary school years, his parents grew professionally; his father obtained senior management positions in government and his mother taught at schools in town. They moved from their rural village to the capital city of the province Polokwane or, as then known, Pietersburg, where his parents also established business ventures and where they eventually bought and owned farms. They moved into a "white" neighbourhood, staying next to one of the teachers of his high school.

[77] André P. Brink in his essay, "The Dove in the Grave", tells of the significance of this moment. Hani's family released white doves next to the grave and as they do, one flies under the coffin into the grave. After several speeches, including by former president Nelson Mandela calling for reconciliation, booed by young comrades, one of them jumped into the grave and set the dove free. See Brink, A. (1998) *Reinventing a Continent: Writing and Politics in South Africa*, 1982-1998. Cambridge: Zooland Books.

6.1 High school (2001-2005)

The school Thabelo now attended was recognised as one of the top 10 schools in the country, which had recently won recognition for its progress with racial integration. Here, as at primary school, Thabelo achieved well, holding several leadership positions in sport and in class and represented the school in arts and culture programmes.

As at primary school, his high school teachers were white. Issues of race and racism were never discussed at school, even though several racial conflicts arose at the school and brought with it greater awareness of race and of racial identity. The first of these incidents was the conflict between his mother and one of his teachers who was also their neighbour at home. His mother was angry with their neighbour, when the white, female teacher in class jokingly referred to the number of siblings in Thabelo's family, considering the comment insulting – "this white person is saying now you have a lot of kids". Thabelo disagreed, though, and told his mother, "But Mom, you kind of do have five kids." However, this teacher later also commented on his father's seniority in government, a comment his mother also considered insulting, but that Thabelo considered an attempt to compliment his father for "coming up in the world". Only later Thabelo saw these events for their racial significance.

A second conflict that signalled race as an issue at high school was the appointment of the first black (male) teacher. One of the white teachers introduced soccer to the school, presumably to accommodate a growing black membership of the student body. However, on one occasion this teacher joked with the new teacher when one of his ears was bandaged, saying, "You left a piece of your blanket in your ear."[78] The black teacher felt deeply offended, while the white teacher and the students "all took it as a joke".

As more black teachers joined the school, this white teacher was "edged out from soccer". This conflict was aggravated with black male teachers avoiding interaction with white teachers. Soon "rumours were going around" that the rugby poles were to be replaced by soccer nets, that rugby would become the secondary sport, a black principal would soon head the school and that black staff and students would "take over the school".

[78] The traditional Basotho blanket holds deep cultural significance as traditional emblem of "who the Basotho people are as a nation" (Kay, 2012, 95). Blankets are received and awarded at major public events as marks of honour, while the colours and designs of a blanket are symbolic of the identities, social status and dignity of its owner. A joking reference to the blanket would cause great offence.

The learners considered the teachers' fears ridiculous, since "we're all still playing rugby, black or white", but the rumours caused an "exodus of white learners, leaving, leaving, leaving, leaving". The numbers of white learners dwindled to such an extent that by the time Thabelo had finished high school, in his estimate, the ratio of black and white students had fallen from 50:50 to 90:10. Most white learners had moved to a neighbouring school where its traditional white and Afrikaans culture and climate would prevail.

Muntu, Kaffir and black

However, it was in intimate friendships that Thabelo experienced the most traumatic incidents of racial conflict at school and for the first time "clicked the race thing". He was part of a close-knit group of boys, black and white, who became friends on the sports field in their first week at school.

Pete, his best friend, was white, and they would often sleep over at each other's homes and play sport together. They were so close that "people would call me Pete and him Thabelo". One day, after a sports event, Thabelo missed his lift and Pete offered to take him home. However, traveling with them was Pete's aunt from Zimbabwe, who refused to be in the car with "a black guy", calling Thabelo, "*muntu*" – a derogatory term for black people. While shocked at this response, Thabelo "took it not as a race thing", but rather as her anger at the "land grabs" in Zimbabwe or that she simply was "old school and hated everyone". It seems Pete's aunt was a former Zimbabwean landowner forcibly removed from their farm.[79]

Thabelo "forgot" about the incident and their friendship continued as before, until a deeply disappointing conversation on racial labels. Traveling together on a school bus on an athletics tour, Pete declared that Thabelo should not take offence at the word "*kaffir*", since Thabelo was black, but not a "*kaffir*". Thabelo remembered his shock when Pete said, "No, Thabelo, understand this, you're not a *kaffir*, you're a black guy, so it's cool, you're cool, it's those other guys that do one, two, three."

[79] President Robert Mugabe implemented a "fast-track" land resettlement programme in Zimbabwe in 2000, which included violent occupation of, and removal of white owners and their workers from commercial farms by militias and veterans of the liberation wars. See Manby, B. (2002) Fast track land reform in Zimbabwe, *Human Rights Watch*, Vol. 14:1, and Law, K. (2014) "Mostly we are White and Alone": Identity, Anxiety and the Past in Some White Zimbabwean Memoirs, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, doi: 10.1111/johs.12090.

Thabelo replied, "But Pete, do you understand what you're saying, because I could say you're cool, you're a white guy, but a 'Dutchman'[80] is that and that type of person." Thabelo remembered that he "could not believe it" and considered the conversation his "first racial fight". For Pete the distinction between "*kaffir* versus black" was the same as "Dutch versus English". While they stayed friends, the incident introduced some distance with Pete from then onwards moderated his language in Thabelo's presence.

Honours lost

Thabelo faced another major trauma with a white friend, David, whom he did not consider racial at the time. Thabelo and David were members of the school choir and roommates when traveling for performances. As part of the choir, they participated in a well-established Afrikaans eisteddfod for schools and travelled by school bus to the host town. While there, the two of them found a way to buy alcohol and got members of the choir drunk – the incident caused embarrassment for the school. Disciplinary steps followed against the learners, but especially so against the leading culprits, Thabelo and David.

The incident was all the more serious as they both served on the learner representative council (LRC) and David was soon to be appointed as deputy head boy of the school.

David's mother, who was a senior teacher at the school, intervened with the disciplinary process – she discussed with Thabelo "all at stake" for David, and requested him to protect David. Thabelo played along, accepted full responsibility for the incident and consequently, while David continued as deputy head boy, Thabelo lost all his "honours and his badges were taken from him". Thabelo felt betrayed since David in fact "took most of the alcohol home with him", and since the school was more lenient in disciplining white learners, while the black learners "all were punished in some or other way".

Still, at the time, Thabelo refused to consider this a racial incident, but "simply a matter of favouritism", and was prepared to make the sacrifice as a matter of courage. David and Thabelo were never again roommates.

[80] An ethnic and derogatory reference for the Afrikaner to show contempt established during British colonial rule and still used among white English speakers, and as such similar to the racist reference 'kaffir' for black people. See Tavuyanago, B., Muguti, T. and Hlongwana, J. (2012) Victims of the Rhodesian Immigration Policy: Polish Refugees from the Second World War, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 38:4, 951-965.

Losing his honours and his seat on the LRC did not prevent Thabelo from influencing learners, but rather strengthened his resolve. During his final year, his frustration with the LRC caused him to challenge authority, even to the point of rallying the final-year class to riot at the main office building – "I got into a lot of trouble, but what could they really do to me; they've already taken my prefect badge and everything from me." The incident followed the mugging of a learner "50 metres from the school", and Thabelo's concern that instead of addressing this issue, the LRC focused on projects such as "painting the walls of the school". Raising the issue with the LRC, Thabelo was told, "You're not supposed to speak; it's not your position."

Reflecting on the incident Thabelo felt,

> "It was the stupidest thing I did at school, but I don't feel bad for the fact that I addressed something that was wrong, but that I was disrespectful to the leadership of the school – I just ran my mouth."

Thabelo would later remember this incident when as a student, he would face similar conflict and deal with difficulties by "running his mouth" – challenging leaders and authority with little regard for respect or protocol.

Coconut

It was at high school that Thabelo was first labelled as "coconut". At a school dance for Valentine's Day, his date for the evening, Susan, a black woman, teased him for dancing with white learners, saying, "But who are you, why are you separated from us, you're a coconut – it's not a bad thing, you're just black on the outside and white on the inside." Pete laughingly agreed, "Ha-ha, you're a coconut, but it's cool, man."

For Thabelo, what Susan said that evening and what Pete said for "*kaffir*" and "black" were the first times he really felt "racially angered".

However, these moments of anger still was not enough for Thabelo to use race as defining framework to make sense of conflicts he witnessed and experienced. It was only when he joined the University of the Free State and moved into a residence on campus that Thabelo said he became "racially aware".

6.2 Arriving on a racially segregated university campus (2006)

Thabelo enrolled at the University of the Free State in 2006, the year before the university would start interventions for racial integration in residences and the Reitz video[81] to protest integration was produced. His father was already a doctoral student at the university.

Thabelo's first sense of a segregated campus was the observable differences between white and black campus residences. Driving with his dad to his new residence, the road took them past the oldest residence, House Abraham Fischer, on campus – a beautiful building of sand stone and wooden doors in the classic architecture of the previous century; flags flying and banners outside; students dressed up in suits and were "chucking balls around" on the green lawns outside. "Is this my residence? This is a nice place," he thought.

Then, slowly the road turned left and away from this residence to arrive at his, "And I'm like, but I just saw that nice residence over there. Here's my residence … and they hardly have a name in front of their house. I walk in there and everybody's black, and I'd seen the inside of the residence – no furniture and nothing was intact." Intrigued by this difference between the residences, he decided to investigate and walked around the building to enter another neighbouring white residence, only to find, "There's trophies, they have sofas, and they have all these pictures, TV screens." Thabelo arrived in a situation that he could not understand or explain.

'These people are against you'

However, soon Thabelo would encounter the executive committee of his residence to explain the confusion. "Here is how the university works," the senior student said, "if you're white then graduating in record time applies to you, but if you're black, your record time is at least two or three years above that, because that is just how it's going to work – this university is not for you."

The residence senior continued, offering evidence of his claim, "When you write your first paper, just look at the Afrikaans side, you'll see their questions get explained and you don't

[81] "Reitz" refers to the name of the residence that housed only white men at the time and where the video originated in 2007. The residence was named for a former President of the Orange Free State and first president of the Senate of the Union of South Africa, President F.W. Reitz, who was held in high regard by the Afrikaner community. The residence was subsequently closed and later reopened to house international scholars and professional programme students. See Verschoor, T. (2015) *The mapping of Reitz*. Stellenbosch: African SUN Media.

get yours (on the English side) explained." A myriad of such interactions with senior students transferred to Thabelo racial and angry knowledge, which was entrenched in residence initiation practices and in what was modelled to him and expected of him as member of the first-year committee. He could not avoid becoming increasingly aware of the racially segregated nature of campus life, or resist the confusion and racial anger it taught.

A segregated life

At the time, student life on campus for the most part consisted of residences competing or interacting with one another in cultural, sports or social and community outreach programmes. Due to the racial placement policy of the university this meant that white and black residences competed against one another and that socialising or non-competitive programmes were also racially segregated, to such an extent that Thabelo remembered, "You had white events and black events."

Black and white residences would sit separately at the annual award ceremony of the student community service fundraising programme, with the black residences that year protesting the event by singing songs during the announcements or shouting them down.

The event was cancelled. Black residences attended major campus events under protest, distrusting the white control of programmes, "We already told ourselves, we knew that we're not going to win" and so "black hostels only competed with black hostels."

Residences also were largely left to students to manage by themselves, while the staff wardens in the men's residences played an advisory, rather than a managing role. This meant that student committees directed the internal programmes of residences in full, which included the established traditions of initiation of first-year students and newly elected student leaders. Quite simply, "things that had become tradition", such as hazing of first-years, defined residence cultures.

Tacitly approved by an uninvolved university, the continued initiation of junior students by their seniors in the residences strictly adhered to unspoken rules of secrecy, "so that the first-year almost feels guilty for going and reporting that they feel bad that this was done to them." Students kept hazing secret also because "they feel like, no, I need to do this to deserve to be here and part of the residence" – they gained recognition and shared pride by struggling through initiation, and a sense of belonging with the shared secret of that trauma.

Residences established extreme loyalties among and between year groups, upholding the all-encompassing authority of senior students who designed the residence culture and activities – the *"ou manne*" (old men) of the residence, who held more authority than the elected executive committee did. This system of seniority ensured "what the *ou man* says goes, regardless of what the Prime – the chairperson of the residence, wants". These strong identities of residences were rooted in racial segregation, defended as a matter of culture and tradition and maintained with violent initiation practices and powerful peer networks of seniority, and institutionally condoned by student life programmes and the "fierce competition" among residences.

The segregated nature of student life continued also in the classroom. The university language policy allowed for English and Afrikaans classes, black students attended English classes and white students the Afrikaans, inevitably continuing the racial distance and conflict that developed among residences in the classrooms. When white Afrikaans students would join his English class, Thabelo would feel, "How dare you be here?" The conflict in separate language classes also found expression amongst white students with white English-speaking students joining black students against Afrikaans students attending English classes. According to Thabelo, "Even if English students hate black students, they hate Afrikaans students more, and they befriend black students simply to annoy white Afrikaans students."

Rapidly racialized

So rapidly and deeply were Thabelo's sense of self and others racialized during his first year that when invited to and visiting a white friend and his family in Botswana at Christmas that year, he could not relax with the family, but distrusted them. "I could no longer be open to a white person, even with more than 80% of my friends being white." Thabelo had to recognise in himself that which he could not understand for campus life namely, that "a person could justify disliking or not living or socialising with another person based on their skin colour". Even worse, Thabelo had internalised the racial propaganda to the point of complete distrust of white people, often asking himself, "Do they feel I don't deserve to be here, do I belong here, or is he here just because he's black," which Thabelo felt was "the worst thing that can happen to any child post-apartheid".

The segregation and fierce competitions among students in residences and classrooms often found violent expression on campus, especially at the Reitz residence.[82]

Considered common occurrences, stories of senior students assaulted when walking by this residence would regularly spread across campus. One such incident related to Thabelo was of a black female friend who walked home from class one evening in her first year. She was attacked by "a bunch of white guys who jumped out of their car by the pool, shot at her with a paintball gun, swore at her and called her all the nice colourful black derogatory names".

Arriving at her residence, she felt she could not speak to anybody at the time,[83] left campus and went home for two weeks. No one from the residence contacted her during that time, only discovering her absence when wanting to fine her for not attending house meetings. As a result, even though she stayed in the residence, "she wanted nothing to do with the residence".

Campus life (re-)segregated students to such an extent that when you "meet a person you would have gone to high school with, they would not greet you, while you're on campus.

> "You would go to camps together and be the best of friends, but the moment you stepped onto campus, people went their separate ways. If you met them on the bus, at the bus station or at the airport on your way home, you would chat and catch up, and talk and laugh, but the moment you're on campus and he's wearing his residence uniform and you're wearing yours, he just wouldn't greet you. He just would not talk to you at all."

Several of Thabelo's black friends would tell him, "I was at Grey College and played sport together with those guys since Grade 1, all the way to matric, and even Craven Week – the national selection league for Springbok colours, but while we're on campus, he will not greet me."

The social climate on campus was such that students from a white residence could not be seen greeting a black student, "not because he doesn't want to, but to fit in with his people".

[82] The residence historically housed former members, and their children, of the in/famous recce unit of the apartheid South African Defence Force, 32-battalion, and still is closely so associated. See Bothma, L.J. (2006) *Die Buffel Struikel. 'n Storie van 32 Bataljon en sy mense.* Bloemfontein: Handisa.

[83] The incident took place in 2009; the first year racially diverse placements took real effect in campus residences, but the residence then still was considered white for all intents and purposes, also with white student leaders and matron.

Segregated town

Faced with a segregated campus, Thabelo rather explored life in town and found friends off-campus, but this strategy failed to protect him from racism. Mostly attending during that year and throughout his studies clubs and venues considered white, Thabelo quickly discovered racism in a segregated town. He developed strategies to ensure that fights would not break out due to his presence – "to not get my head bashed in", befriending the staff and bouncers of any of the clubs in town "very, very quickly". Never would Thabelo and white friends "under any circumstances go sit in the mall together, because I would be that black guy and he would be that white guy". His experience of racism at social venues in town would continue throughout his studies. In his year as Prime (chairperson) of his residence, when he joined a birthday party of a fellow chairperson at the very popular Afrikaans venue in town, *Mystic Boer*,[84] "in five minutes a fight almost broke out, because a black guy is coming to this establishment".

Segregated faith

The racial distances in social life were also evident in religious communities, with church memberships largely either black or white at different denominations. In his second year on campus, Thabelo attended a church service of the local Dutch Reformed Student Church, the largest of the traditional Afrikaans denominations. Affectionately known as KovsieKerk – (Kovsie Church),[85] the church is located immediately adjoining campus, such that it seems part of campus. Historically considered an integral part of the university community and student life on campus, the pastors of the congregation functioned as the spiritual leaders of (white) residences and of students generally and as such had direct access to residences, often attending house meetings or meetings of executive committees of residences.

At the time, the university announced its intention to integrate residences racially. As the service continued, the "pastor preached that we will pray and God will make a way and get us out of this situation". Thabelo took offence to the sermon thinking, "What God is this that is actually going to divide you, that black and white people should be separate."

[84] "Boer" in this context, different to black protest language that uses it as derogatory reference, refers nostalgically to the Afrikaner community. The venue's name plays on that notion, drawing mostly Afrikaans students as its clientele.

[85] "Kovsie" is a brand name of the university derived from its first establishment out of Grey College, a neighbouring high school, and originally named the College of the Orange Free State, "Kollege van die Oranje Vrystaat", affectionately called KOV-sies.

This distrust of racial integration was true; not only for this congregation and for various pastors and churches either tacitly or overtly offered messages of segregation. Churches were leading students in arguing that, "If God wanted us to be the same, he would have made us the same; so we must stay in separate residences."

Segregated love

The continuity of racism between campus and town hit the hardest when Thabelo fell in love and dated a student from the *Baster* community in Namibia.[86]

While not white, she was lighter skinned and, according to Thabelo, "looked very white", while he was darker-skinned and therefore more easily identifiable as black. At the time, this meant that they often were considered and responded to as an interracial couple. Holding hands on campus, students would openly challenge them and in town, they were often refused entry to empty restaurants. They would walk into a shop together, "She would be in front and she'd be allowed in and the security would stop me and say, 'Can we help you?'"

One day as they were walking on campus, holding hands and passing a white couple outside one of the residences, the white male student loudly exclaimed, "*Nee, dit is nie reg nie* (No, this is not right)," and angrily got up to approach them. The woman restrained her partner, but as they walked on, the person continued saying, "They can't do that."

As their relationship continued, it was not only white responses, but also the comments of black students that created difficulty for them, with "black guys cheering me on, saying, 'Ja, date that white girl to annoy those white guys,' or 'Aren't your own people good enough for you anymore?'"

They were still in a relationship at the time of the Reitz incident on campus, and during these events, such comments and open criticism of their relationship intensified – his relationship with her, for those around them, held political meaning and value, as was the case for most, if not all, interactions between black and white.

[86] The *Basters* are an ethnic community of Namibia, descendant of European settlers and *Khoikhoi-* and *Nama-*tribes, which established itself as an independent polity at the town of Rehoboth in 1870, until Namibian independence in 1990. In apartheid policy, the Basters were not considered black, white or coloured, due to a historical insistence on their unique cultural-ethnic heritage. See Zandberg, J.G. (2005) *Nation- and Image Building by the Rehoboth Basters. Negative bias concerning the Rehoboth Basters in literature*, at http://rehobothbasters.org/publication/198-nation-and-image-building-by-the-basters?id=198.

Segregated leaders

Even though "the biggest thing I could not get was the segregated residences", in his first year Thabelo had already felt that he wanted to lead as chairperson of the residence and its executive committee. His experience as member of the first-year committee of his residence had already introduced him to the racial parameters and tools required for success in student leadership.

As in student life generally where "white people were out to get" black students, everything in leadership also was about or defined by race. As a leader, "you had to talk politics, use political jargon and huge words out of context, and when a white person tells you to do anything, it doesn't matter how practical it is, you oppose it right then and there; you take your stand against these white guys". It was the accepted norm for students to represent racial blocks, it "being so natural when you walk into a meeting that black people sit on one side and white people sit on the other side".

However, Thabelo considered black and white students more alike than different for their self-definition as victims, their "victimhood mentality". Black students would say, "I'm already a victim," and white students, "I'm going to be a victim," and everybody waited for the slightest opportunity to blame the other for racism or some form of injury. As victims, white residences fought perceived threats to their culture and tradition, and black residences fought for equal recognition and support.

Still, black and white both used the same tools of racial identity, strict hierarchy and seniority, hazing and initiation and competition with other residences in their struggle as victims. It was this similarity of political and social activity in residences and their shared goals to protect their established traditions and identities as residences that would bring black and white residences together to protest the integration interventions of the university in 2007 and 2008.

Segregated politics

The similarity of victimhood among black and white students was evident especially in student politics – for the most part, the domain of the Student Representative Council (SRC), the highest body of student governance at the university. Student politics on campus were then closely aligned with national political parties and the campus branches of different parties contested the annual SRC elections.

Members of the Provincial Legislature on the left and the right would regularly comment on policy decisions of the university as well as in the local media in parliament. Party members would criticise the role of cultural associations in racial politics on campus[87] or challenge decisions of the university on its residential placement policy[88] – even going so far as to challenge decisions of the university in the high court.

This extreme proximity of national and campus politics meant that aspirant student representatives could only run for senior student representative offices when aligned to and nominated by a party campus branch. It meant the elections followed the manifestos and campaigning strategies of national and/or provincial structures of political parties and incumbent SRC members, while in office, represented party agendas. This system of representation fuelled the racial division between black and white students, especially during elections when campaigning relied on racial agendas to galvanise the vote.

"Everything was so separated," and the different parties would campaign only in white or black residences, as in Thabelo's case with the VF+ that would not campaign in his residence. The campus branch of the Vryheidsfront Plus (VF+) represented white student interests, while the campus branch of the South African Student Congress (SASCO) represented black student interests on campus, in not only formal political processes, but also influencing residences directly.

Earlier, white residences established a campus association called "Here XVII"[89] to represent their interests, which later joined with the Vryheidsfront to form a "Kovsie Alliance" – a political unit to defend white interests on campus, later on incorporated with the VF+ Kovsies. SASCO joined forces with the African National Congress Youth League and the Young Communist League as members of the Progressive Youth Alliance, the youth wing of the ruling alliance of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

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[87] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2004/11/18/VX/4Bk/03.html. Retrieved on 09/22/2015.
[88] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2007/06/25/VB/6/jmkoshuise.html. Retrieved on 09/22/2015.
[89] The name "Here XVII" (Lords 17) plays on the historical "Lords Seventeen", the board of regents of the Dutch East India Company that owned and directed much of colonial occupation in the 17th century. Registered as a student association, the Here VXII was a men's association aiming to promote Afrikaner culture and Christian values on campus, with its female counterpart, "De la Quellerie", named for the wife of the Dutch East India Company administrator, Jan van Riebeeck, who established the first colonial trade post at the Cape, Maria de la Quellerie.
See http://supportservices.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?uid=89. Retrieved 09/22/2015.
See http://supportservices.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?uid=87. Retrieved 09/22/2015.

These developments were important because of its close association of broader political interests and agendas with campus residences.

At election time, Thabelo explained, "Kovsie Alliance and VF+ would go to white residences, saying all the black students are trying to come into your residence and change everything in your residence, and then SASCO came to us, saying you are in this situation because those white people don't want you to be part of them." Thabelo distrusted this close association of political interests and were aware that, "It is our leaders on the ground, people who claim to have our special interests at heart, who created this conflict."

Political parties maintained the racial divide among students by claiming and targeting residences as political strongholds for racial mobilisation and by establishing racially defined agendas as the dominant discourse for student representation.[90]

So well-established and institutionalised were the modalities of segregation in all spheres of life, with segregated politics, committees, residences, classes, churches and social venues in town that very few spaces remained, if at all, for white and black students to interact meaningfully and build trust. However, one such opportunity that dramatically affected his racial sense of self and others arrived for Thabelo when, wanting to run for the executive committee of his residence in 2007, his second year on campus, he joined an annual leadership development camp organised by the student representative council and the department of student affairs, called PO10SEE.

6.3 A turn: dramatic intimacy (2007)

At the camp, Thabelo met current and future student leaders, black and white, and shared conversations and established relationships beyond the segregated environment on campus, since at the camp, "race falls away and does not matter there". At PO10SEE,[91] students met one another not as representatives of a race or a residence, but as individuals and for the first time, Thabelo got "properly emotional" with and shared his life story with other students, often crying together as they shared their histories – a new intimacy in stark contrast to the distance among students on campus.

[90] See http://mg.co.za/article/2008-02-29-the-free-state-four-and-the-ff-factor. Retrieved 09/22/2015.
[91] Named for its wordplay on "potency", the camp focused on leadership development with adventure activities. A selection programme, participants were nominated by Executive Committees of residence and campus student associations and the SRC and the camp was then, and continues to be an important milestone for aspirant student leaders.

As the camp got underway, white and black students still kept racially apart, the white women "apprehensive when it came to actually linking up and sitting next to black males" as they travelled by bus to the venue, and everyone choosing sleeping bunks as either white or black on arrival.

However, during the camp the students "went through all the experiences together" and by the end of the camp, "those white ladies were the ones that found the most trust in the black males" and on the bus returning to campus, "people made a concerted effort to sit together, not because of black or white, but because they connected". As the programme of the camp physically tired them, and frustrations with the adventure challenges increased, students had to deal with and share their emotions openly and honestly, so that "generalisations fall away and people don't talk about white or black people, but as individuals". For the first time, Thabelo could share his story as a student and not as a black representative, but rather for himself, for what he had overcome and achieved in his life.

This experience to open up to racial others and share "what got Thabelo through this journey and how did I get there", and to be recognised and valued for who he is, profoundly influenced Thabelo's understanding of himself and challenged his own sense of black victimhood – "I got past representing myself as a victim, to representing myself as Thabelo."

The experience also broke down barriers for white students. At the camp Thabelo realised that when he represented "my people as black people" in conversation with white students, they would "put up their defences", because since in claiming this, "I had already put up my walls as a black person". He explained,

> "If I talk about the experiences of black people of the last 500 years, then it's almost like I'm bombarding you, bombarding you; white people did this, white people did that, which you can't answer to; I'm taking their pain and I'm putting it on the person I'm talking to, as opposed to me talking about my own experiences so that you can see what created Thabelo."

This strategy to focus on his own life narrative allowed white students to share theirs with Thabelo, relate to him and "not put up their own defences". This mutual openness and discovery of the unique narratives of every student, white and black, is what Thabelo calls the "potency effect – we were all amazingly close". The significance of their newfound unity was best illustrated when a white student from a farming community confided in Thabelo about his transformation.

As they together struggled to complete the adventure challenges and discussed lessons for leadership, he saw Thabelo not as "the black guy over there", but as an equal. His white friend had crossed the major social distances between white farmers and black farm workers in rural South Africa.[92]

A troubled new path

Thabelo immediately translated this dramatic turn in his life to action. He would carry "pictures around of where I grew up" to show to other black students saying,

> "Listen, this is where I was born, this is where I am now, so if you're going to let your circumstances dictate to you, if you're going to let that skin colour of yours be your excuse for failing every single time, then I'm sorry, you're not going to get anywhere."

He would face fierce opposition for his views, but also gain support as he stepped into leadership positions.

The camp was significant for Thabelo, also because he met senior student leaders who, to his disappointment, later protested the racial integration of residences. Thabelo interacted and grew to trust the SRC President, a white, female and Afrikaans student, who was part of his team during the camp. She impressed Thabelo with a "willingness to follow instructions" and her motivating the team to come together, but afterwards shocked him in student transformation discussions, when "the tables turned" and she opposed racial integration interventions on campus.

Recognised at PO10SEE as a future leader by current and aspirant student leaders, Thabelo was invited to participate in a student transformation forum established by the university to consult with students regarding campus racial integration and its intended new residences placement policy.[93] However, at the time, "We didn't really recognise this as a reality, because everybody who was opposed to integration was actually in the committee," which included established leaders of the VF+, the SRC President and senior Primes, who were

[92] See Atkinson, D. (2007) *Going for Broke, The fate of farmworkers in arid South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
[93] The university council adopted the policy document, named *Increasing diversity in UFS main campus residences: A new policy and role for residences*, at its next meeting, June 2007. See http://www.ufs.ac.za/about-the-ufs/governance/policy-documents. Retrieved 08/17/2017.

"openly against integration". For Thabelo, read against his interaction with the SRC President at PO10SEE, he could not make sense of her opposition to racial integration.

Thabelo felt betrayed, thinking, "At PO10SEE we hung out, we ate together, we shared food from each other's plates and you took care of me when I got sick, how is it now all of a sudden you can't live with a black guy or a black lady?" The potency effect was not strong enough to withstand the powerful divisions between black and white when they returned to campus life – "We come back to campus and we shift back, we play to the crowd to not be shunned by my people." Thabelo's disappointment with the SRC President was that she also returned to the established political positions and racialised agendas of campus leadership, while for him, a different trajectory had started. As Thabelo started his career as student leader, and did so with a first transformative experience at PO10SEE, campus racial divides and change interventions at the university were building to a climax and would culminate in the traumatic incident of the Reitz video. Thabelo was in the thick of things.

6.4 Stepping into leadership (2007)

In the weeks prior to his election to the executive committee of his residence, the university council adopted the new policy to increase diversity in residences so heatedly debated among student leaders at the student transformation forum.

The policy most prominently established percentage ratios for racially integrated student placement, reserving 30% of places in a residence for the racial minority[94] – in Thabelo's case this meant that 30% of the places in his residence were to be reserved for white students. However, "everybody across racial lines thought that this was just to get black people into white residences" and black students felt "let them do whatever they want, we don't care".

Considered a direct threat to the established foundations of residential culture, identity and tradition, especially so by white students, political parties and residences combined forces and organised public events to protest or support the racially integrated placement regulations of the diversity policy. The VF+ marched with white students to protest against the new placement policy and argued for freedom of association, calling the university policy one of "*gedwonge integrasie*" (forced integration). Black students replied by marching in support of the new policy, organised by SASCO.

[94] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/about-the-ufs/governance/policy-documents. Retrieved 08/17/2017.

Heading to the main administrative building on campus, these marches always would depart from a residence on campus,[95] illustrating the role of residences as sites of political and racial mobilisation. The regional Afrikaans newspaper, *Volksblad*, reported in detail on the developments, often commenting on the changes, and the VF+ lodged an application in the high court to overturn the decision of the council to adopt the policy, which it withdrew later.[96]

While these challenges to the change process continued, the interventions for racial integration in practical terms focused on the duties of student leaders, converging on the next phase of Thabelo's life on campus – student leadership. Following his election as an executive committee member of his residence, Thabelo was entrusted with the first-year portfolio, responsible for the process of selection and placement, orientation, student life participation and general welfare of new students in his residence. The portfolio was critical to maintaining the culture and tradition of a residence, and to inculcate the extreme loyalties and behaviours among residents to sustain this. He also served as deputy chairperson of the committee, which was an indication of the recognition he then already commanded among his peers, also politically, as his residence were considered a stronghold for SASCO.

Thabelo's first portfolios in leadership were important, as the new policy directly influenced his duties – the new regulations for racial integration were scheduled for implementation during his term of office. Thabelo would oversee the selection, placement in rooms, welcoming and orientation to his residence of the first white students placed there, and their adjustment and general welfare in a majority-black residence community.

Frustratingly, though, students did not receive adequate support, but rather "were simply told what was going to happen, not how, and that the housing department would put mechanisms in place to make sure it happens, but none of those mechanisms were put in place". For Thabelo, management was saying, "We know where we want to be at the end of the day, but you get yourself there, we're not going to give you any tools, even though we promised you."

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[95] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2007/08/20/VB/3/hcsaskooptog.html for reports on the protests; http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2007/08/09/VB/9/mrprotes.html. Retrieved 09/22/2015.

[96] The op-ed comment of a deputy editor of the newspaper illustrates the close alliance of residence, politics and media against transformation on campus. He critiques the new policy using the same argument of "forced integration" as used by the VF^{+} in its court application contesting the new policy, and he reveals himself as alumnus of the Reitz residence. See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2007/08/08/VB/6/sakegert.html, retrieved 09/22/2015.

Distrusting management

This caused much anxiety among student leaders as the leadership training offered to newly elected committee members focused on "how to transform the image of our hostels and vision statements, but nothing on how to handle black and white". For black residences in particular, as was the case for Thabelo, these frustrations became worse when the housing department did not provide them with applicant lists that included sufficient numbers of white students and when, at the start of the new academic year, the department advised residence leaders to allow "white learners to trade places to stay with another white learner, if they didn't want a black learner in their room, even though you've already placed them".

For Thabelo this was seriously problematic and so began his distrust of university managers and their real commitment to racial integration – "Seriously, I looked at leadership as a big old hypocrisy." His distrust of management intensified when students were allowed to move between residences after the first weeks in a particular residence, which mostly meant white students moving from black residences to white residences. In Thabelo's case, a student who later would become SRC President was allowed to move to a neighbouring white residence. These allowances fed distrust among students – "I didn't understand why you talk integration and then you allow this to happen."

Thabelo relates his frustration specifically to the role of the Dean of Students, a white male, who "put up a rule that no student will be allowed to shift from this residence to the next, but in the next meeting and he's like, no, I lose money if these (white) students leave, so if a student is really not comfortable in a black residence, and he wants to go to a white residence, I'm going to allow it". For Thabelo, the Dean's allowing white students to move between residences was intensely disappointing, and he considered it "the most hypocritical thing I've heard in my life and fuelled the idea that white people don't want us here".

His growing distrust and experience of ever-increasing distance from university leaders left Thabelo to decide for himself how to deal with difficult matters, as was the case with many student leaders. Thabelo was not alone in his distrust of the university management and within weeks following the arrival of new students in residences at the start of the academic year, black and white student leaders were united in their anger with management, which would lead to the first major student protest and campus disruption of 2008 – the year known for the Reitz trauma.

Protesting management

At the time, the shared frustration of residence student leaders focused on the lack of support from management. Students were left to be "counsellors and parents" to other students on campus, but when problems arose, "the university blamed the students or their parents" – university management often considered the racial prejudice gained and/or rekindled at home a major cause of racial prejudice among students.

As the frustration intensified, the Kovsie Alliance and VF+ called a meeting with the executive committees of all residences to galvanise support in efforts to "get rid of" the Deputy Dean of Students, a black woman, whom they blamed for transformation. SASCO warned black residences not to join the meeting, as "you guys are being used as puppets". However, at the meeting black residences replied to the complaints tabled by the VF+ with a series of complaints against the Dean of Students, and calling for his resignation. Considering the Dean an ally, the VF+ withdrew from the meeting, but the residences continued their discussion and decided on protest action against management and its handling of the student consultation process for racial integration in residences.

The protest action would take the form of the mass occupation of the lawns in front of the main administration building. The action galvanised new initiatives among black and white leaders, and Thabelo was especially struck by the efforts of a white leader of another men's residences to bring black and white together, his efforts standing in contrast to the white, politically aligned SRC members in support of segregation. Their protest action was "the first-ever act of integration" for Thabelo's life on campus, with black and white residence leaders symbolically "refusing to stay in, and so moved out of their residences". They would camp out, barbeque and drink together in plain view of senior management. As the protest progressed, white students from a neighbouring residence "for the first time came over to watch a football game and got beers together" at Thabelo's residence.

However, on the second and final night of their protest, things turned violent when "everybody decided they were going to break down campus". During the protests, students told one another, "Let's get back at management, they don't listen to us, they're not doing anything to benefit us, so let's make them listen to us." For Thabelo there was no black or white on that night, white and black residences together "got the booms, chucked stones at windows or burned tyres".

During that night, a court interdict was served against all students and several students were arrested during the violent protests[97] – suddenly "the air changed completely and people became separated again". The political parties stepped into the volatile and divided climate and framed the violence rather as a protest against "people merging".

The VF+ claimed the protests as evidence that "all students were opposed to racial integration", while SASCO claimed white abuse of black intentions – "its these white people doing this, we told you they were going to use you". However, for Thabelo and others across groups the protest achieved what management could not, bringing black and white together, thereby also justifying their protest against unreliable management.

Even the house wardens applauded the students, saying, "What management refused to do, student now decided." The students got what they wanted; meetings would follow the next day and action taken by the Vice-Chancellor and senior management to address their concerns. Considering it an achievement for their consultation, student leaders and the senior management of the university concluded their consultations following the mass action by residences and together released a public statement on the way forward.[98]

However, reflecting on this "yo-yo effect" of racial togetherness and distance, Thabelo realised that with their protest, "people did not really come together, but rather were two groups coming in on different sets of anger". This thought would be powerfully confirmed within days of the combined statement of the executive management and the students when the Reitz video hit the local and national media, causing "the biggest damage to any process of dialogue".

6.5 Reitz and anger (2008)

The video itself a protest action against racial integration, four white students recorded games played with older, black workers of the residence, most of whom were women, as mock selection for placement in the white residence, including eating food urinated in by the students shown in the video.

[97] See http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/10-UFS-students-held-after-riots-20080221. Retrieved 09/22/2015, and http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2008/02/23/VB/1/hckovsieseen-295.html. Retrieved 09/22/2015.
[98] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=899. Retrieved 08/17/2017.

At first, the video did not anger Thabelo, who only wondered at their reasoning for producing the video, quite simply because "we know these guys; there was a history with this residence".

Reitz were known for racial assault, often "hosing down black woman with water pipes" as they walked past, where one of Thabelo's residents was assaulted in the week prior to the video.[99]

The attitude of the Reitz students caused further anger among students since, as time went by, "some of the Reitz guys were just like, we don't care", and instead of agreeing to dialogue, they barricaded their residence. However, a public statement by the university management pushed anger over the edge, including Thabelo's own violent response to the video.

The statement "focused on the ladies, questioning why they were doing these things, while they are supposed to be at work". This angered Thabelo and black students in general as it symbolised the disregard of the workers' dignity as mothers and confirmed their view of management as protectors of white interests.

Students felt, "Are you kidding me, did you not just see the video, how these mature women were disrespected?" Again, they felt, the university "were not going to focus on Reitz and do something about" the continuous racial violence associated with the residence.

Violent protests by black students followed, also targeting the residence itself, President Reitz Kamerwonings, where students barricaded buildings with furniture. Reports abounded of intimidation and threats between black and white students, with violence escalating to the point of riot police breaking up protesting crowds with stun grenades.[100] Classes were suspended, immediate investigations followed and the four white students were criminally charged. Soon further interventions followed,[101] including the closing down of the residence, the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor and the appointment of consultation teams to resolve conflict and mediate reconciliation.

Thabelo was arrested during the violence on campus, but the public prosecutor decided not to proceed with a case against the arrested students.

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[99] See http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/university-of-free-state-set-to-explode-1.391495?ot=inmsa.ArticlePrintPageLayout.ot, retrieved 09/22/2015.
[100] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2008/02/29/VB/1/hckovsieseen.html, retrieved 09/22/2015.
[101] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=907, retrieved 09/22/2015.

In the weeks and months following the Reitz incident, the racial divide between black and white students deepened, while distrust within racial groups intensified.

Thabelo was good friends with the Prime of Reitz at the time, but "they could not be seen together or greet in public" for fear of being named as traitors to their own. During this time his intimate relationship with his girlfriend, who was black, but looked white, increasingly came under fire, with black students asking, "Aren't your own people good enough for you?"

Fully engaged and now standing in both the wake of PO10SEE and the aftermath of Reitz, Thabelo faced a watershed moment in his life, as was the case also for the campus community – deepen the racial divide or seek reconciliation?

"I will not fall for it a second time"

The increasing racial divide could not continue and soon after the university introduced an intervention programme to make sense of the racial conflict and facilitate the implementation of the new policy for racial integration in campus residences, appointing a team of external consultants[102] for this purpose. Dialogue programmes were introduced with student leaders to debrief racial trauma and committees were established to consult further on the regulations and measures for implementation of the new policy for racial integration in residences.

Thabelo was not convinced and distrusted the new interventions, "I'm for integration from the beginning, but this new exercise is not going anywhere and I will not fall for it a second time." At the heart of his distrust was his failure to understand the need to consult and/or negotiate the implementation of racial integration with students, while the justness of this cause was so obvious that management should simply implement the programme.

> "Why is it that they sit down and talk to students who are reluctant to have the integration thing, when this is management, they own the university and can just say, okay, we're placing these people in the residence, from January we're integrating?"

The new interventions proved to him that management still wanted to leave critical decisions to student leaders, rather than actually committing to racial integration.

[102] The iGubu Leadership Agency; see http://institute.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=12, retrieved 09/23/2015.

However, as the new interventions took effect, Thabelo recognised that this "were the first time they actually sat down and somebody brought up the issue of race". While the university still needed to prove its commitment to Thabelo, this was the first real attempt to ask students, "How do you propose to deal with it?" His initial distrust of the process turned to hope for what may be possible for students to achieve. As in the new dialogue forums of the university's Residences Diversity Project[103] students continued to wrestle with the project to integrate the residences racially, Thabelo wondered, "From what we just came through, are we really ready for this conversation?"

The dialogue forums provided student leaders with the platform to reflect on their fears and uncertainties, as well as to offer leaders the opportunity to help one another cross these boundaries. In the discussions, white students would say, "I'm not racist, but I can't stay with a black guy, because they wash themselves in their room," and black students would say, "I can't stay with that guy, because what if he wants to listen to his Afrikaans music?" Having lived with these experiences in an earlier life, and with his recent turn at PO10SEE, Thabelo now could offer leadership. Thabelo's responses to these concerns were to unmask the arguments as nonsensical, arguing for "simple solutions to the excuses they brought up", advising them to "wear earphones of you don't like the music" or "ask the guy to go to the bathroom".

Now a leader in residence and on campus, Thabelo continued to unmask such arguments with white and black students, most prominently when students commonly "used the cultural excuse", claiming that black and white cultures were different and for that reason integration could not succeed. Thabelo consistently pointed out the lived realities that challenged these views, "We've eleven different languages spoken in our residence, what culture are you talking about," or "A house meeting is a house meeting, whether or not a black or white person attends it," or "A rugby match is a rugby match, whether or not you have a black person in your team." Thabelo remembers that even his girlfriend was frustrated with his insistence that "everything should make logical sense", such as that he though it "illogical to believe that just because there is a black guy staying at your residence, Stagedoor is no longer going to be Stagedoor".[104]

[103] The intervention programme in support of the new policy for racial integration in residences.
[104] "Stagedoor", a prominent residences programme of *a cappella* performances, was considered a white event at the time.

Thabelo would face conflict for challenging the culture discourse and remembers a particular meeting where he argued, “If your culture is that of segregation and of hurting people, then maybe that culture needs to be destroyed.”

Thabelo continued growing in confidence to challenge the persistent racism around him, but at a cost to his own aspirations of leading in the residence.

Hero, but *Coconut*

After the Reitz incident, during his arrest at the subsequent protests on campus, black students considered Thabelo a hero, “with my face in the news, the black guys thought this guy went after Reitz, he is our hero, and the white guys are like, go after that guy, he and his comrades are the reason for what’s happening to Reitz”. However, Thabelo’s challenge to the established notions of black victimhood was considered at odds with his status as hero to a black cause. This tension would later reach a breaking point and deepen Thabelo’s disappointment with racial politics.

In 2008, following a successful term as member of the executive committee, Thabelo contested elections for the chair of his residence, but he was unsuccessful, because he was labelled “a coconut” in the residence – a label that gained traction due to his interaction with white students, personal style and newfound voice against victimhood. They could succeed with this line of attack on his integrity, because Thabelo’s sense of identity and self-confidence were never an easy fit to the racial codes and stereotypes in campus life and residence culture.

Since his first year, most of his friends were white. He played card games and attended white social venues, enjoyed movies his black friends never heard of, spoke English with a white accent, had a “white” girlfriend, and most prominently, liked rock music, “Metallica, Bob Dylan and Simon and Garfunkel”, while his black friends were “into house”.

It also did not help that Thabelo continued to challenge black victimhood directly, even in one case asking, “What white person live like that, that you must wear a R1 500 shoe to show that you’re more important than everybody else, even though that R1 500 means you mother can’t feed herself, but must go hungry for a week?”

His opponents could cast doubt on Thabelo's loyalty to blackness and black students. Soon called the "white guy in his residence", black students perceived Thabelo as "though I never lived the life they did, while I come from a worse background that most of them, but they did not want to understand this, because I speak English in a certain way. They'd say, 'if you've lived like me, why do you not sound like me'".

Moreover, it was true, Thabelo often felt that "he could not relate to the stereotype of being black as a mentality that I'm victimised" and there were "lots of people who did not talk to me, because they think I don't know struggle".

The coconut label was not new to Thabelo, called by the name at school and on campus, but still it angered him, as it "would mean that I'm not part of this class of people who you're saying are struggling at his university, that I'm not victimised, I'm on the other team – the Afrikaans team, who also don't socialise with me. It means you have rejected your black culture and your heart is white". A friend also called him and his father coconut, because "Now we've gone to all these schools, our thing is education, and you don't speak like a black person."

"I used to feel horrible when the black students would talk about their Kasi experiences, while we moved from our mud hut to a suburb, and I never got the chance to have a tavern fight, to sneak into a tavern and see a person stabbed or hear a gun shot in my residential area." At high school, Thabelo also had no *Kasi* friends and they could not stand him, often calling him a coconut on the playground, "before they knew anything about me, only by the way I spoke". On campus, in his residence, where blackness meant belonging or not, Thabelo often regretted his parents' success that moved them not to the township, but the suburb, because he felt, "I missed out on being black."

It was only over time, with the pictures of his early life he could show, and the many conversations with students to share his life story and that of his family, their traditional and rural history and their struggle credentials, that Thabelo were accepted as black.

For Thabelo though, his "Blackness goes as far as my skin colour, because everywhere I go, white and black will call me a coconut, until they hear me speak Sotho or any other vernacular and know I was raised Venda; that I know traditional ways to show respect."

Still, the stringent racial framing of their residence identity, and its combined power with the political discourse of racial victimhood at the time meant that Thabelo was not elected to the executive committee of his residence. This would change the year after, when the residence elected him as Prime (chairperson), because "The house committee that year almost destroyed the residence, and even though they did not like me as the coconut, they knew I got things done."

At the end of that year, 2008, the university requested all residence executive committees to recruit white or black students to serve on their committees and establish racially integrated teams in preparation for racially integrated placement of first-years in 2009, as was required by the new placement policy. This proved an important initiative also in Thabelo's own development in the year to follow.

While not serving in a formal structure during that year, Thabelo continued to help his residence prepare the ground for racial integration. He worked with the committee member for first-years and translated the residence songs into English and Afrikaans, supported the one white committee member who bravely joined their residence that first year of integration (2008/9) and through the year continued to challenge racial prejudice in house meetings. One such incident occurred when a black house member complained at a house meeting, "a white student had washed his boots in the kitchen sink". Thabelo challenged the statement by referring to a complaint about a black student fined for brushing his teeth and making a mess in the kitchen the week before, asking "Why, when the black student does it, he's only a disgusting person, but when it's the white student, he's suddenly racist?"

Black Rector

That year, 2009, was also significant for the appointment of the first black Vice-Chancellor and Rector of the university, Jonathan Jansen, who took office in the middle of the year.[105]

Galvanising local and international news, the new Rector's arrival was met with suspicion by white and black students, as by opposing political factions. According to Thabelo, "The general reaction was, they hired a black guy so that they could use him to get to black people and long before I'd even met him, or heard him say one thing, I didn't like him; I made up my mind about what type of person he was, because of what everybody said about him."

[105] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/archive.aspx?news=1288&cat=1, retrieved 09/22/2015.

Political and racial messages about the new Rector already started months before Jansen would take office and as soon as the university notified all students of his appointment. Black students then already argued, "They made him Rector, because they can control him," and decided "He wasn't for us." Political branches weighed in, such as SASCO, saying "This guy speaks Afrikaans and his hired by the most racist university in the world, which clearly means he is there to defend the white man and be their puppet."

White students responded similarly, saying, "It's over for us, because they brought in this black guy," who is not under the control of the VF+. They thought, "Based on his history of integration at another university, he's going to be against the white man and will do war on all the white residences." These messages mobilised fears among students so that "white residences armoured up". When Jansen announced that the racial integration of the residences would continue, white residences felt "We told you so, he's getting rid of us," and black residences felt "he's trying to put white people in our residence to get rid of black people."

6.6 Leading for change (2009-2010)

Amidst all the rumours and soon after Jansen took office, Thabelo decided to run for the chair of his residence again and he was duly elected. This allowed him to participate in the leadership development programme that was overhauled as part of the new interventions for racial integration. The programme included preparatory sessions with candidates, as well as development programmes and discussion forums with newly elected Primes of residences. Thabelo saw the "PO10SEE effect" of these events among student leaders, especially the open dialogue of newly elected Primes with the new Rector, Jansen, "with a bonfire and 'braai' – barbeque, where everybody was allowed to give inputs". Another highlight was a "Primes liaison tour" that, amongst others, visited the Apartheid Museum and Constitutional Court, Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument,[106] "where everybody bonded". Sadly, though, Thabelo remembers that on their return to campus "this again changed", noticing a similar regression as following the PO10SEE amps. Students needed still deeper change.

The promising incidents Thabelo participated in did not shift his distrust of the new Rector, at the heart of which was a sense of betrayal, a mark of his own sense of victimhood. Thabelo blamed the Rector for inconsistent statements.

[106] The Apartheid Museum and Constitutional Court are located in close proximity to each other, as are Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument, offering diverse views on South Africa's history and democracy.

At a candidate preparatory session, the Rector had said "We're going to integrate and there is no way I'm going to allow one, two, three," while later at a house meeting at Thabelo's residence, "he said he'll allow a student to do that, which to me was the biggest betrayal". However, in reality Thabelo did not actually attend the candidate training session where the first statement was made, but compared what was reported to him about the Rector's input at the training with the Rector's inputs at the house meeting.

Reflecting on the experience, Thabelo now understood his strong response to the new Rector as a continuation of the victimhood taught on campus. "I was black, which means I'm victimised by the university, so that the moment this man who was sent by the white man, says one thing to the white people and completely another to black people, I'm victimised again."

Thabelo's established distrust of university leaders, strengthened by racial suspicion as mode of interaction among students, predisposed him to complete distrust of the Rector, irrespective of what the Rector actually would do; the first black Rector would always betray him.

As was the case for black students generally, the decision of the Rector to forgive the four students who made the Reitz video as part of a process of reconciliation, and invite them to complete their studies, confirmed for Thabelo that the Rector was "playing white". SASCO would soon voice their distrust of the Rector and changes on campus with public statements calling the Rector a "coconut", the very label used to discredit Thabelo.

"Look at your seating arrangements"

Thabelo's distrust of the Rector started to shift when Jansen, in a formal meeting with the Primes (chairpersons) of all residences to discuss the racial integration programme, challenged the leaders present on their commitment to the project by pointing out their hidden racial behaviours. As the meeting started, the Rector asked, "You're talking about integration, but look at your seating arrangements." Nobody had noticed before, but white students sat with white students and black students sat with black students. The Rector "talked to us like a father and asked us, 'How are you going to integrate a campus, when you can't integrate yourself,' and that hit home for me". The observation and comment were significant for Thabelo and he now could view the Rector as "coming with a plan to actually do something".

As Prime of his residence, Thabelo led the preparations in his residence for the second year of racial integration in campus residence, 2010. This included a second year of special recruitment of white students to be part of his residence executive committee, as well as the policy decision by the university to aim for a 50:50 ratio of black and white students in the placement of first-years. Even though Thabelo decided, "I'm going to go for this," the process to recruit students for these initiatives would bring him in direct conflict with the new Rector.

Institutionally angry

As part of a recruitment drive for student support for integrated residence committees and placements, the Rector and senior managers addressed student groups of faith communities. Thabelo attended one such meeting at his church, where Jansen requested volunteers to avail themselves to serve in the executive committees of, or to request placement for the next year in racially opposite residences. However, these requests upset Thabelo and he "flared up and ran my mouth". He challenged the Rector for all the established frustrations student leaders had with the university management. Thabelo complained, "All these things we now see on the pamphlets, we've been suggesting to management for two, three years, but it's not been done and now you're saying students are failing and student leaders failed, and that is not right." Other residence leaders also spoke at the meeting and shared similar frustrations that "we've been put in this situation where we had to be the parents, the guidance counsellors," having to solve all the technicalities of selection and placement of students.[107] Thabelo, as much as his fellow residence leaders, had internalised his past angers at management to such an extent that he still behaved as if nothing changed. Student leaders at the meeting responded in frustration in the same way as they did during the residence committees protest action against management the year before: as victims of an unreasonable university. Student leaders were institutionally angry.

The conversation took place with the pastor of the church present, which would later have a major influence on Thabelo's further struggle with racial identity and his distrust of senior leaders. Reflecting on this meeting, Thabelo still feels "I'm not sorry for addressing something that is not right, but for the disrespectful way I addressed the matter."

[107] The departmental management practices for placement of students in undergraduate residences left residence committees to recruit, to select and place students as they saw fit, with nominal oversight by the student-housing department. These regulations were changed in 2011 and now allows only 10% input from students in placements. See http://residences.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?uid=22, retrieved 09/22/2015.

White incompetence

Fully committing to the processes for racial integration in his residence, Thabelo recruited and appointed white members to his executive committee and for the first time in his residence, "We had a fully integrated residence committee." His racially integrated committee challenged Thabelo's racial prejudice and sense of racial identity.

Having to work with white residence committee members, he saw that both black and white committee members often were equally "incompetent" – a realisation different to what his extended family taught Thabelo from a young age.

The troubled view of his family was that "you don't put a black guy in charge of anything, because he's going to break it apart". Here he learned that "We can't really run things; we're not really efficient" and that when "you're black, you're naturally incompetent." As Thabelo lead his committee, "that was still my mentality".

However, working with white committee members that joined the residence committees, he realised "incompetence isn't a black thing; a person is either able to do the job or not, because we had these incredible well-functioning white guys, incredibly well-functioning black guys and then we had these completely, sorry to use the word, useless black guys and completely useless white guys". Thabelo then "started checking everybody uniformly" and monitored all portfolios equally, where at the start of their term, "I had a blanket thing that I didn't have to check the white guys." However, the shift in Thabelo's handling of incompetence, namely to address it directly, irrespective of racial identity, would cause direct conflict with black students in his residence and on campus.

Resistance in residence

The first of these challenges came from within, when at a house meeting of his residence, all the black members of his committee declared a vote of no confidence in his leadership, called on the members of the residence to support their motion and to walk out of the meeting with them. This drastic action followed a meeting the previous week when Thabelo challenged his team, asking, "How dare you sit here and say you're working with this person and the moment they do something that you've been guilty of on the past and for which you refused punishment, all of a sudden it's a race thing."

Thabelo raised it also at the subsequent house meeting and in particular addressed the issue of seniority, "If you shout at a first-year, which is against the rules, you say, okay, I've made a mistake, but the moment a white guy comes in and shouts at the first-years, all of a sudden that person is racist." Thabelo called on his executive committee and his residence to "break the racial barrier, and to start recognising people as human beings". Black students did not appreciate the comments and were angry with Thabelo.

However, as the black committee members at the next house committee meeting walked out of the hall, not only the white committee members remained, but the house as a whole. None of the residents followed and so indicated their support of Thabelo's leadership, saying, "If those guys don't want this thing to work, and then let them leave, we'll choose a completely new committee." The committee members who walked out "came back and apologised at the next house meeting".

What many could not know was the cost for white members joining the residence, as was the case for one of his committee members, who was a member of the VF+ and earmarked for provincial leadership of the organisation. As soon as he joined Thabelo's residence committee, the VF+ "sat him down in a meeting and told him they did not want him anymore, and got rid of him". Political resistance to their integrated leadership would soon follow also from SASCO.

Resistance in politics

Thabelo faced a second major conflict with black student leaders, but now as up-and-coming member of SASCO – the black political leadership of the campus. One night, SASCO hosted a first-years' party on campus, but refused to adhere to university regulations and end the function at the required time. Thabelo discussed the risks with his seniors present at the event, who instructed him to ignore the regulations, saying, "We'll protect you; we'll talk to the Dean and take responsibility." Thabelo was not convinced and replied, "I know you won't do that," since "all these guys were intoxicated" and were interested only "to show their political clout." Thabelo decided to take responsibility and switched off the power to the venue, ending the party.[108]

[108] The incident caused a public outcry and the Dean of students released a public apology to surrounding neighbourhoods for the disruption caused by the event. See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1637, retrieved 09/22/2015.

This did not sit well with the branch leadership, who had already expressed frustration with Thabelo who, at an earlier conference, questioned the electoral process for the "same sequence of people elected since his first year, the same arguments, doing nothing the solve problems, but still willing to doctor results to keep your position". As was the case at the conference, after the party had ended, his comrades accused Thabelo of "wanting to be popular" and of being "counter-revolutionary" and "ever since then, my nomination for the provincial executive committee never came". When the university took disciplinary steps the week after, "none of these guys were anywhere to be seen".

The experience left Thabelo discouraged, feeling "nobody actually wants change" and with the question, "Could it be that if the university integrates and black people become successful, these guys are afraid they won't have anything to talk about?" He never again took up membership of a political party.

6.7 A turn: initiating the whites (2010)

However, still this was not the worst Thabelo would face that year. Towards the end of his term as Prime of his residence, only weeks before his term would end a video of the initiation of newly elected members of his executive committee surfaced online and went viral.

In the video, white students pretend to swim on the floor while black students poured water over them.[109] Suddenly, as in the case of the Reitz video, a game considered innocent by the students came to the attention of the university management and the general public, and exposed the lived reality of students in residences.

With the memory of the recent Reitz incident, the video quickly was compared to that of Reitz and read by many as another incident of racist humiliation, now perpetrated by black against white. White organisations, mainly the VF+ and Afriforum[110] quickly claimed this interpretation and publicly attempted to discredit the process of racial integration in residences.[111]

[109] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DmeYe2W5dvc, retrieved 09/22/2015.
[110] *Afriforum* then was the newly formed youth league and NGO of *Solidariteit*, an Afrikaans and white workers union. See Visser, W.P. (2006), From MWU to Solidarity – a trade union reinventing itself, *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, Vol. 30: 2, 19-41.
[111] See http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2010/08/03/ff-plus-youth-wants-free-state-univeristy-race-probe, retrieved 09/22/2015.

However, the video included only the white members of the committee, as the black members had already gone through precisely the same initiation at the time of their election, while the white members were appointed to the committee only later as part of the process for racial integration.

The university rejected claims of racial bias in the incident, and disciplined the students for contravening the university rules against initiation.[112] As Prime, Thabelo took full responsibility and was relieved of his duties, as was the residence head, while the rest of the committee were disciplined with community service.

Persona non grata

However, for Thabelo this experience was traumatic not for the disciplinary action taken, but for his sense of betrayal by his own during the incident. While Thabelo was known for not supporting initiation, the single white committee member of the previous term proposed they initiated the newly recruited white members of the residence committee in the same way as all new committee members, arguing, "Let's bring in the new guys as we normally bring house committee members in." Thabelo agreed. For them, this would be a way of establishing equal grounds and shared identity for the newly integrated committee in service of racial integration. However, they would do this by the book, following due process as they saw fit in the absence of university guidance. First, they discussed the idea with the new initiates and only continued with the programme when all the new members "were like, okay, 100%, we're fine with it". The students did not consider this a racially motivated activity.

However, as soon as the video circulated, campus considered it an act of racial retaliation for Reitz, saying, "He got arrested during Reitz for that video, now suddenly he went and made his own." Thabelo now was "persona non grata" on campus and with "everyone calling for heads to roll", he decided not to talk to anyone at the time, but stoically face the consequences, since "I said I'd take responsibility, so I will take the punishment for this." As part of the immediate investigation, Thabelo was asked to vacate his residence and move off campus, while "all my food was on campus and it was during a test week, so I missed all my tests".

[112] See http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/video-not-racist-says-ufs-Rector-1.671802?ot=inmsa.ArticlePrintPageLayout.ot and http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1796, retrieved 09/22/2015.

Black betrayal

However, for Thabelo these difficulties did not compare to the trauma of his rejection by black students, when "not even the old guys of the residence, who were lawyers, wanted to touch me". His sense of betrayal deepened when, as part of the investigation of the incident, his residence warden, "denied he knew anything about it and the students should take responsibility for it".

This happened while the residence warden was present when the committee agreed to the initiation event. He had also met with the committee immediately after the video hit the news, agreeing with the committee, "We know this happened, we're all part of it," a sentiment that strengthened Thabelo, who left that meeting feeling, "I know I will take a lot of fire, but these guys have my back, and on top of that my residence head has my back and said we're all going to take responsibility for this."

Thabelo also felt betrayed by the university, because the university did not offer him any guidance or support in how to deal with the daily challenges of racial integration, but left the tough decisions on how to integrate his committee to him.

For Thabelo and his team, not only did they "joke that I was pretty much the warden", but the inconsistency of the university in how it managed residences was reason not to trust or value its leadership. For him it was similar to how management dealt with alcohol use on campus – even though they knew "that drinking on campus is banned, you still run your little "senior *bonde*" (senior bars) in the residences".

Thabelo felt this betrayal sharply when, after the head of the student housing department had informed Thabelo of his suspension as Prime of the residence, Thabelo found out that "the decision had been taken a week before already". Thabelo could not "believe that you would do that to a person", to leave him to struggle off-campus and without any contact with people for a week before telling him of the outcome.

Worse for Thabelo, though, was the discrepancy between the housing department breaking its own rules with no consequence, referring to the department's allowance earlier the year for two white students to move from his residence to another, while he gets suspended for contravening the initiation rules.

White support

For Thabelo, “The two people that I got most disappointed with in that whole process were two black males, my residence warden and the head of the housing department.” In contrast, it was two white males who first supported him during this time; the Prime of a neighbouring white residence who “prayed with him” and helped him phone his parents, and the Dean of Students, newly appointed earlier the year following the retirement of his predecessor.

The Dean of Students “assured me that even if people construe it as the Reitz thing, its initiation, a bad and dumb thing to do, but don’t compare it with Reitz” and phoned his dad to calm the family.

Thabelo was surprised at the “major support” from white student leaders and white residences in general, some even claiming, “If you get expelled, we’re going to print t-shirts and protest on your behalf.” Thabelo felt, “This is my support base, my family and those people, my white friends.” For Thabelo, above all, this realisation “caused a shift in my thinking of victimhood; if I’m going to be victimised be these people, how come they’re defending me”? However, still feeling he had no one on campus to turn to, and now completely distrusting the university management, Thabelo found support at church.

6.8 Finding new meaning (2012)

In contrast to his experience at the Dutch Reformed Student Church where the pastor prayed for God’s protection from integration, Thabelo “was shattered” when he attended a service of his local charismatic church and the “first thing the pastor, a very Afrikaans man, said, was to get over this race thing”. In the service, the pastor was “telling older people, look at this young generation, we make such a big thing of race, but our kids can’t relate to us anymore”, which he repeated in all the different services, irrespective of whether attended by predominantly black or white. The pastor called on the congregation rather to focus on the problem “that there are people out there who have nothing, that need to be helped”.

The message hit home for Thabelo. He remembers, “It shook me a bit, that this Afrikaans guy would offend this big crowd, who he has to rely on for the running of the church, and tell them to get over the race thing.” Thabelo soon joined the church where, even if race was “still there, white and black students are very open with and genuinely close to each other”.

Withdrawing from campus life, Thabelo experienced a spiritual awakening, focused on "growing spiritually" and regained much of his sense of people beyond race as prior to joining campus. So deeply felt was this awakening that Thabelo considered his white pastor a "spiritual father".

This became a lived reality for Thabelo with his spiritual father white, and his "natural father" black. He now "stopped [racially] separating everything and received from anyone, regardless of what colour they are, regardless of what culture they are". His definition of his fathers beyond race for Thabelo symbolised his liberation from racial framing, but also from much of his angers at authority and leaders.

Thabelo "got over a lot of my hang-ups by learning to submit to leadership and authority, believing that I cannot call myself Christian and not accept authority that God placed over me". Thabelo learned that "I need to serve with the best of my ability in the position that I am and work with leaders appointed above me, instead of distrusting you and thinking you're out to destroy me." Thabelo now felt, "It does not make sense for leaders to destroy the people who they have authority over," allowing him to shift his distrust and suspicion of the university leaders following the initiation ordeal.

Family resistance

However, these views caused intense conflict with his family. By the end of that year, he "got into a heated fight" with his brother during a special broadcast of a service of his church.

His brother, who "got saved years and years ago", questioned the integrity of the white pastor heading Thabelo's church community, arguing that white people will always abuse the good intent of black people, saying, "A white person will get black people to sign up for his vision and before you know it, he's taken everything from them." Considering his brother a spiritual mentor, Thabelo was disappointed, and challenged his brother, asking, "How do you quote scriptures and talk of the power of God, but you don't believe that God has the ability to change a person's mentality?" Thabelo's mom had to break up the fight, but soon after, during the next mid-year break, Thabelo would have a similar conflict with his mother.

Their discussion started when his mother read and discussed a bible passage, Psalm 23[113] with a group of learners who stayed at their house during a winter school programme. Thabelo did not know "how she linked it to the text, but somehow she managed to link it to how white people lied to you". Even though "I have a great deal of respect for my mother and will not talk out of turn," Thabelo decided to talk to her about her views that "white people will destroy and never give black people an opportunity". Thabelo asked her, "But Mom, you can't take the bible and preach hate." This angered his mother and they talked for a long time. Now "she's become quite careful to bring up the race thing around me".

Although saddened by these conflicts, Thabelo felt motivated to address the racial perspectives of his family. "It has to break somehow, even if I understand how they feel, and I also became more and more racist in the space of a few months [on campus], because I came back from that and I actually started seeing people for what they are." Thabelo felt that his struggle with race and racism left him in a place where "I can't reasonably and honestly just let my parents go on in a life like that, especially now if it's going to rub off on my baby brother, and then he's going to go into university and he's going to think you can't get anywhere in life." Thabelo's agency for change now extended also to his intimate family.

The healing Thabelo found in spirituality lead him back to campus, where he could, as if for the first time, notice the changes taking place on campus, and again get involved to support the process of integration. Thabelo was struck by the many signals of change, such as black residence committees now introducing their newly elected leaders also to white residences, who received them well and vice versa. He noticed black residences competing and performing well in student life programmes, with his own residence winning the Stagedoor competition and he was struck by the racially integrated student showpiece, Extravaganza. He saw the closing down of the bars in men's residences and the "banning of the political parties" to allow more students to participate in governance.

Thabelo now saw, "people drinking together, going to sports meetings together, going to church together, giving each other lifts, hanging out, going on holiday together, black and white, across the racial lines". For Thabelo, surprisingly, real changes were visible and felt real, since "These days it's so open on campus, while it was so awkward in the past and I don't come across those people at social venues anymore that want to bash your head in."

[113] The well-known Christian Old-Testament biblical text, The Lord is my shepherd.

Thabelo found that “The radical faction decreased so that even the black guys now don’t speak about the race thing anymore, but now is all about defending their leader and their party. Most people now are in church, not in politics.”

Thabelo felt a shift had taken place on campus from “focusing everything on race, to focusing on diversity, not identifying as a black or a white residence, but as a residence that wants to fit everybody in”. In all these changes, Thabelo was encouraged by “the new values of the university”. Values now had become “a huge emphasis in residences”, with residence committees not only adopting values, but also “painting them on the walls right there right at the entrance, so people live up to them”.

These changes confirmed for Thabelo that, “the varsity is still committed to whatever it was committed back then,” when the new interventions for change started in 2008. Encouraged, Thabelo decided to participate in campus life again, but now with a new purpose, a new sense of self.

Making new sense

Reflecting on his life experiences of race, Thabelo realised, “I’ve become someone that often find yourself between white and black, between groups,” moving in and out of black and white groups and facing a backlash when refusing to strictly adhere to the racial codes of his peers, such as when labelled a coconut. This angered Thabelo,

> “It used to flare me up to the point of rage, I hated it. Especially when I got to varsity, because when you started calling me a coconut that would mean that I'm not part of this class of people that you're saying are struggling at this varsity. You're telling me that I'm not struggling with you, because now it was a very separate thing between black and white. The moment you tell me I'm a coconut, is to say that now I'm not being victimised, I'm on the other team.”

This experience of in-betweenness was traumatic, because

> “I felt like I had missed out on being black. I didn’t have those stories. My stories more closely related to the experiences of my white friends on campus, nobody relates to that. They are like, what planet are you from? That was tough for me, because now I'm sitting in a residence of a 162 people. Whom do I relate to? I can't even relate to the Coloured students. For a very long time I could not relate to anyone.”

His distance from his peers in strict racial identities led him to question black culture, and rather value ethno-cultural heritage, asking,

> "I don't think there is something like black culture; I don't believe in it. There's this argument I used to have a lot with my, if you will, black friends in high school, where every single time they'd get into trouble for something, they say it's our culture. What culture are you referring to? I've never really liked the whole [argument] of it's our culture. If you're Xhosa the woman takes a subordinate role. In our culture women actually hold a very high rank in our culture. So what culture is this that you mean?"

For Thabelo, his

> "blackness goes as far as my skin colour. I don't know how to identify myself as a black person, because everywhere I go, white or black will call me a coconut until they hear me speaking Sotho or they hear me speaking in any other vernacular language. I wasn't raised black, I was raised Venda."

Still, this view of his 'otherness' did not lead Thabelo to consider his identity more valuable compared to his racial peers, but rather an expression of difference, "I didn't think I knew more. I just think I know different. I've tapped into a different form of pop culture than they."

Building bridges

Thabelo had realised that it was his ability to move between opposites, between black and white, that enabled his leadership for change,

> "The fact that I grew up a black person in South Africa, with white people, allows me at least to relate on both sides … the fact is that I have some degree of [objectivity] that allows me to speak to both my black friends and my white friends and say, but notice it in this way; to relate to all, because I'm not subjectively for the white man and I'm not subjectively for the black man."

Living through his struggle from victimhood to a leader in-between black and white, Thabelo now could make sense of who he was, his ability to build bridges between black and white.

> "I think it's a valid, it's a valid observation, because time in itself shows that I've always been able to relate to people, regardless of their skin colour or [culture]. I mean it goes beyond even sexual orientation, because now I'll get into trouble with the hard core Christians, because now

> I'll make friends with a gay guy, because I don't – I don't really care. I think it's actually helped me a lot to bring down a lot of prejudice."

However, his struggle to break free from racial victimhood and the revenge of his political peers for his initiative showed Thabelo that

> "people that stigmatise are the people that realise that if this thing [bridge-building] becomes valid, if this type of person is going to go be raised up and then placed in a place where people then say, I can be that type of leader, I am that type of person and I can lead; then they [who stigmatise] become irrelevant."

This realization galvanised his leadership, because Thabelo thought that:

> "The biggest people that called me coconut, are those who were reluctant towards change, that believe that if Kovsies become fully integrated, SASCO becomes irrelevant, because if more [people like me] come along, if we don't stigmatise what Prof Jansen has, that means suddenly I can no longer say that the administration of the university is racist, because now here is a man who relates to everybody. I can no longer go and say the Villa house committee is racist, because here comes Thabelo who relates to black and white the same thing."

His trust in the process for change and confidence to lead for change restored, Thabelo decided to contribute to student leadership development and, where it mattered most, at PO10SEE. Sharing a passion for leadership development with Dawie, the white Prime who had supported him during the initiation debacle the previous year, and who became a close friend, together they redesigned and developed PO10SEE to include not only aspirant student leaders, but also first-years.

Thabelo had come full circle on campus, returning to that moment in his journey, at PO10SEE, which set him on a different course to where campus life at the time directed him: away from racial victimhood, rage and hate, to counter-cultural leadership for reconciliation.

Yet, Thabelo could now calculate the cost of in-betweenness, where it is

> "a burden and I don't like the fact that I see how people are going to misconstrue [bridge-building]… that type of illustration negatively as coconuts… taking knocks. How do you get a person who's lived like that their whole life, but has been, you know, constantly taking heat, taking knocks, how do you restore a person like that? It's very difficult, because now if a person like that, like me, is not taken care of, you could lose it, or not want to use it."

Now, Thabelo's purpose in working with his peers on campus was to embrace those leaders who lived a life of in-betweenness and could become, like him, bridgebuilders

> "I'm sure there are a lot of people who were once like that, but they don't want to be out there, because they have taken these knocks. How do you build those people up? How do we identify those people? How do we mould them into the leaders they should be, that they need to be?"

CHAPTER 7
DAWIE'S STORY, A STRUGGLE WITH FEAR (2002-2012)

"It was time for initiation. A month, two months that were the worst time of my residence life. I didn't want to attend class, I was afraid I might walk into a senior student, I didn't want to leave my room, because I was afraid I'd have to do certain things if I come out of my room ... I basically lived in fear for my life for a certain time."

Dawie identifies as male, Christian, white and from the rural parts of the Eastern Free State province. Born in 1988, Dawie considers his early life that of a "normal boyhood" – a happy and sheltered life growing up and finishing school in the same rural community, though his parents moved between adjoining towns when he was young. His father, who served in the police force and his mother a teacher, provided him and his brother with a privileged upbringing, not rich, but not lacking for anything.

Starting school a year after the political transition of 1994, his primary and high school already included some black learners due to national policy to integrate schools racially. It was especially in playing sport together at primary school that Dawie would interact and become close friends with a black learner whose parents also served in the police force and "from the richer black community". Already then, at a young age at primary school, Dawie became close friends with a black learner, "sitting together during break and joking about girls". Still, in the context of their communities with strict racial distance and hierarchy, they only spent time together at school.

Racism was pervasive in Dawie's community. With most of his friends' parents either part of the farming community or the police force, racism was part of everyday life, most notably for Dawie as a child in the racist language used "as normal" to refer to or talk about black people. While Dawie could not remember incidents of racial violence, and noticed that older, white people would not use such language in front of their workers, references to "*kaffer*" and "*meid*" would be generally used "behind their backs".

A family legacy

The reality of racism, a painful matter for Dawie, was also part of his own family, with his father using racist language and referring to their domestic worker in derogatory terms.

His mother, though, "was the opposite" and while his father was not overtly racist in public, and thus "did not embarrass" Dawie, the underlying racism at home was "real and painful". Dawie's father as a police officer participated in enforcing apartheid laws. However, the past was not discussed, not at home, nor at school. Only when older, at high school, would his father share some past experiences with Dawie, relating his duties as a police officer during the time of "pass laws".[114] Patrolling white neighbourhoods after the curfew, "they would always find someone" and would have to "take them to the holding cells", where they would be "arrested, let go or sometimes beaten up".

This knowledge was confusing and traumatic for Dawie, especially when "white people want to forget about apartheid" and say "it was bad, but it's in the past now". Often angry, Dawie would think to himself, "If it was that bad, why not do something about it now; make it right?"

Growing up in a loving and supportive home, Dawie did not feel close to his parents.

7.1 High school (2002-2006)

As at primary school, Dawie for the most part enjoyed life at high school, successfully negotiating the codes and traditional hierarchies of the school and white, Afrikaans community. Recognised as a leader, Dawie throughout his school career was appointed as captain in sports teams, elected to the Learner Representative Council and lead outreaches of his church youth group.

Sports were also the only space at school where white and black could comfortably interact, spend time together and become friends. It was only during his senior grades at school that the numbers of black learners at school sufficiently increased to have an impact on the school culture. As also at primary school, Dawie enjoyed friendships with black learners here, but that would not extend beyond together playing and competing in sport and informally socialising on the school terrain daily during breaks. This was so because the school remained largely white and Afrikaans with ways of doing that for Dawie "felt like apartheid".

[114] The pass laws legally required black people to carry a "pass book" indicating permission to live in a particular area, or enter or remain in certain areas after a curfew. Controlling movement of people, the laws provided labour to white areas, excluded black communities from the economy and disrupted family structures in black areas. See Savage, M. (1986), The Imposition of Pass Laws on the African Population in South Africa 1916-1984, *African Affairs*, Vol. 85: 339, 181-205.

Felt like Apartheid

It was especially in his senior grades that Dawie started noticing a racial undercurrent in school. In Grades 11-12, Dawie's year group was divided into four classes, classes A to D. Classes A, B and C were Afrikaans-medium classes with 10% black learners in his estimate, while class D was labelled an English-medium class with mostly black learners. The male teachers at school in particular "were openly racist and would advantage white learners over black learners". This Dawie saw for himself once when a black learner "for good reason requested to hand in an assignment a day later", which the teacher declined, while a week earlier Dawie had requested the same allowance due to a sports commitment, "which was approved by the same teacher". White teachers would also interact much more freely and comfortably with white learners, "inviting them into their offices to chat and joke, but never with black kids".

Still, at the time Dawie did not "have a reason to question the teachers", since "it was never discussed among the learners or the teachers" and was accepted "as the norm". However, Dawie could not avoid at some point dealing with racism, as one of his closest friends at school, Thando, whom he played sport with and socialised at school, was black.

Once, when he was captain of his cricket team, he invited his team and friends to sleep over at his home as they were about to depart on tour to compete elsewhere the next day. Often having (white) friends over at home, his father would be "jovial and fun" with his guests. Not knowing how his dad would respond, he first asked his dad permission to have his friends over and thereafter informed his father that Thando also would be joining. Dawie felt "disappointed" with his dad who "did not know how to handle the situation and was withdrawn" while his friends were around, especially as Thando was "part of his friendship circle", a friendship forged in the furnace of school sports.

Focusing largely on sport and valuing achievement in sport far more than any other discipline, especially so for boys, Dawie remembers that school was about "making men of boys" and teaching them "to be strong". Acceptance and belonging to the group for the boys at school meant you had to participate in sport, and survive its rites of passage – the traditions and culture of violent hazing among team members.

On the sports field, the friendship between white and black that was not possible anywhere else found space to grow. Living together through the violence of hazing, Dawie and Thando became friends.

Tekkie-oond

Dawie's school had "banned hazing", especially since a learner of the school was hospitalised once following such an event. However, not allowed anywhere else, hazing still continued among learners in sports teams with established traditions to recognise one's your selection and inclusion in a team. Coaches, teachers and parents "turned a blind eye" to these practices, leaving the learners to continue with the practice as they saw fit. Meant to show one's "toughness as a man" and so gain belonging to the group, some of the practices required "you to have your hair shaved off" or expected to "eat funny mixtures of things" and go through the "*tekkie-oond* (boot oven)".

The worst of the initiation practices among boys in their teams, the *tekkie-oond* consists of the whole team forming a line on the field, each member with a sports boot in hand. New team members then are expected to crawl on all fours under the legs and through the line of the team, receiving a hiding from each player as they move down the line. Especially when going on tour, such traditions would flourish with teams finding inventive ways to continue hazing and pranks.

Not impressed with these traditions, Dawie refused to allow it when he was appointed as captain of his team, questioning what "kind of manhood" it taught. Becoming "very unpopular" among senior players, he disallowed traditions of hazing while on tour – "never really resolving the conflict with his team". However, violent hazing and the fear that accompany it remained a major part of Dawie's life as he moved to campus. It was "the way things were". Dawie's confidence to challenge racism at home, inviting Thando to stay over, and to interrupt the culture of hazing in his cricket team came about through alternative experiences at church.

Church in the townships

While not from a "very religious family" and attending church "only with his mother", Dawie found a different life experience to the traditional culture of his community in the youth ministry of the local Dutch Reformed Church congregation they officially were members.

At a weekly "*koffiekroeg* (coffee bar)", the youth group of the congregation together enjoyed "praise-and-worship" and played volleyball. They also arranged outreaches with the guidance of the youth pastor of the congregation, "visiting orphanages and disability centres" to offer support. Every Friday the group would engage with street children in town and in the local townships, "playing soccer, sharing food and providing clothes", very different from his father's life in apartheid South Africa as police officer enforcing its laws. This allowed Dawie to see much of the reality of racial distance and the legacy of the past in black communities.

Many of the outreaches of their youth group were organised in partnership with Christian youth organisation, *YWAM* – Youth with A Mission. Known as an organisation with a Pentecostal faith tradition, the local leaders of YWAM were a husband and wife team together leading its outreaches. An interracial couple, in "their authentic love for each other" Dawie for the first time could "see the normality of mixed marriage".

However, it was in the mentorship of his youth pastor that Dawie found the new perspectives and courage to break away from tradition. Often, they would discuss "what it meant to be a leader" and "what impact a good man" should have, leading Dawie to question especially the violent masculinity he saw modelled in his community. Dawie questioned the values and integrity of men in authority around him, increasingly growing to disrespect the inconsistency of what they said and what they did and rejecting the pervasive culture of fear that was an integral part of male belonging.

So strong was his wish to be rid of it all that Dawie initially refused placement in a residence on campus, especially since a student had died during hazing on campus two years before.[115]

7.2 Arriving on a traditional Afrikaans university campus (2007)

Originally deciding against applying for placement for fear of the inevitable hazing first-years had to endure, a friend convinced Dawie to apply for placement in the residence he would eventually lead as its Prime (chairperson). The residence committee member responsible for first-years was from his hometown, which gave Dawie some confidence, while his arrival on campus and at the residence with his parents was pleasant enough.

[115] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2005/03/08/VB/9/01.html, retrieved 10/03/2015.

For him, “the residence committee met with the parents and informed them of programmes and rules”, while the first-years “received uniforms, rule books and barbequed together”. Dawie knew that as soon as the parents left, their initiation would begin.

Fear of hazing

Going through hazing for much of the first term of his first year, Dawie grew so fearful of what senior students would do that he “stayed in my room for the most part, not attending class”. During this time, they were “taught to be aggressive” and instructed to defend the honour of the residence, especially when people walked across a revered piece of the sidewalk in front of the residence. Symbolising the “proud tradition of the residence”, first-years were instructed to “beat anything and anyone that comes [across the pavement], throw bottles at cars driving past and to come with bats and hockey sticks when a man [steps on that pavement]”. However, it was also tradition that when a woman would dare walk over the “sacred piece of sidewalk”, she would be “captured, taken inside the residence, showered in hot or cold water, and offered a towel and a cup of coffee”.

While as first-years often “laughing together” at senior students who “just wanted to control us”, this was the “worst time of my residence life” and ended only in the “first-year *ontheffing* (end of induction)”. Considered the culminating point of the traditional initiation programme of residences, the *ontheffing* is an event where first-years are recognised as full members of the residence community, and relieved from hazing practices, often in the form of a trial of courage.

A late-night event the whole residence participated in, it started off with a house meeting where the senior students “turns on the residence committee, shouting at them, even breaking windows”, causing much anxiety among the first-years who depended on the committee members for some form of protection. Now unsettled, the first-years had to change into training gear and “run through the darkened corridors of the residence, doing push-ups, star-jumps and singing the residence anthem in different corridors”; then running out of the building, they were “hosed down with cold water”, only to return inside to repeat the routine, but this time “one-by-one”. As he ran through the dark corridors, Dawie had to reply to the shouting of the seniors, “challenging him to repeat parts of the motto” of the residence.

Tired and cold, the ordeal ended with a "guard of honour by the senior students at the front door of the residence", with first-years now allowed to use the main entrance, welcomed and "greeted by hand" by the chairperson to welcome them as full members of the house. After this event the attitude of the senior students changed, with "no more shouting" at first-years, but without changing the remaining traditions of seniority in the residence. First-years still had to "sit on the floor during house meetings, not allowed to look up or participate in the meeting".

Only white women

During his first year, Dawie "found it strange" that they never had an "*inter* (social interaction)" with black residences on campus, often wondering, "Why are there these other residences on campus [if we never see them]?" When asked about this, the residence committee indicated that "we only *inter* with white woman's residences," and when the first-years requested a social event with one of the black woman's residences, they were told, "Only if you arrange it yourself." Even more confusing for Dawie, they even did not compete against black male residences in sport, but only with white men's residences, which they were "fiercely in competition with".

Soon Dawie would discover that racial distance among residences was not an exception to the rule of racial distance on campus, especially in classrooms where white and black students were divided into Afrikaans and English classes.

So tense was the conflict among black and white that as students move past one another between classes, "pushing and shoving and cursing at one another" were commonplace among black and white – a friend once declaring they'll not attend class as, "I don't want to move through the black wave."

Blacks to fit in

Claiming to lead the way for racial integration, the residence committee had selected and placed four black students as fellow first-years in Dawie's residence. Carefully selected for their sports and leadership achievements at school, all four students were selected "to fit the established culture of the residence" and therefore from white schools.

A particular strategy followed by the residence based on an argument "for standards", the recruitment and selection of black students for the residence aimed to "maintain the comfort zone" of the residence, where "a Kasi person would not have survived". Comfortably interacting with the black students, Dawie were aware that they were not fully comfortable in the residence.

This he realised especially during an event at the white, Dutch Reformed student church, *KovsieKerk*, when they jokingly remarked, "Maybe we should leave, it's very white here." Dawie responded, "No, luckily I'm with you." Dawie would eventually withdraw from *KovsieKerk*, even though serving as deacon of the congregation in this residence.

7.3 Reitz and familiar anger (2008)

It was in conversation with his new youth pastor, with whom he talked about "racism and how to make a difference" that Dawie would begin to discover his whiteness, his rootedness in the traditions and codes of race of his home, school and campus residence, and awaken to the horror of Reitz. At first Dawie considered the response to the video an overreaction, since "any of the residences could've done it" and he recognised the typical hazing practices he grew up with in the video. However, the familiar in the Reitz video was not only for its resemblance of pervasive hazing in white residences, but also as an expression of the institutional anger at the university management among white students.

They were always the villains

For Dawie, Reitz did not happen in a vacuum, but was another expression of the familiar anger especially among white residences – a "tradition of vilifying management" – was part of everyday life in his residence. Nowhere was this more evident than in the weekly house meetings on Mondays that all residents were required to attend. Starting with the first meeting that Dawie attended as first-year in the residence, at every meeting "there was a complaint about top management".

Senior students in the meetings also made jokes about the senior management of the university, focusing "on their supposed incapability to make decisions", joking that students will wait on management "*tot die wederkoms* (till kingdom comes)". However, not only the senior students and residence committee stoked the fires of anger among students, but also the political parties on campus.

Enjoying “free access” to their residence the VF+, the rightest political party representing white, Afrikaner interests, “often visited the residence to interact with students”. Invited by the residence committee, representatives of the VF+ would “address us as first-years and recruit us as members”. As a standing arrangement, the party also was “included in the annual open day programme of the residence”, part of the recruitment strategy for applications to the residence. SASCO, the leftist political student organisations, “never visited the residence” and focused on black residences. “Behind the scenes”, the political parties were mobilising students with racial suspicion. This continued also in the SRC that consisted of members politically aligned to either the VF+ or SASCO, and who would openly declare, “they stand for and defend either white or black interests”. So, when the residence committee called the house together early in Dawie’s second year (2008) to inform students of their decision to embark on protest action against the management of the university, “We knew what this was about.” The residence head also declared “his support for the protest action”, so that it was not difficult for the residence committee to convince the house of the merits of the intended strike. With little effort the residence leaders “incited the house to join the strike”, especially so among the first-years, who were fired up to defend the residence and its leaders against the university. While the strike started out as a peaceful protest, in its third day it turned violent with students causing damage to campus property.

Now embarrassed for his part in the protest action, Dawie at the time actively participated in the violent action and at the time also did not find it strange that “white students caused most of the damage”. Driven by blind loyalty and their inherited anger, they “started fires in front of the residence, burning residence property”. They “got onto *bakkies* (trucks) and moved around campus, breaking booms, tripping alarms and throwing rocks at buildings.” As soon as the riot police arrived on campus, “they stormed back to their residence to hide away and avoid arrest”. Here was their refuge against the university and its demand for change.

Within days of the protest against management, the Reitz video surfaced.

“Out of proportion”

Dawie found out about the Reitz video in an “emergency meeting” called by the residence committee to inform the house of the incident. The meeting focused on the “danger that initiation would be read out of proportion” and students were instructed, “to urgently remove all videos of hazing on the network”.

When Dawie later saw the video, he "was shocked at what they did", but recognised "the traditional practices of initiation" so familiar in his own residence and experiences. While this type of activity was "to be expected from Reitz, it could've been for any of the men's residences". Still, Dawie found felt confused by his emotional response to the video; "it did not feel right", even though it was familiar to him. While this was indeed expected from the Reitz residence, "It could've been any of the other residences [that made the video]."

No discussion about the video took place among students in his residence, or elsewhere, and only "when the dust had settled" Dawie talked with black friends about Reitz. Joining several committees on campus during that time, Dawie interacted with black students who informed him of the "negative connotation" they had to Reitz. Asking their views on Reitz, Dawie's black friends in residence shared with him that "The workers who were insulted and humiliated [in the video] are our mothers and fathers."

Becoming aware of the real trauma of Reitz, Dawie started his journey to disrupt troubled knowledge.

A new church

Thus far fully involved in his residence and for the most part attending *KovsieKerk* as a part of residence culture, Dawie was elected as deacon in the church, but considered it more "a social event than of faith, since no black students attended apart from when forced by their residence committees". In his second year Dawie joined and became more intimately involved in the "more dynamic and interracial" Christian Revival Church (CRC), a local Pentecostal congregation with black and white members where the head pastor often would challenge the congregation on racism. Demanding change, the pastor would ask, "white students stand up for black rights and black students for white rights", and they discussed the pastor's sermons in prayer groups, "asking what role they could play for change on campus".

In the months following Reitz, Dawie and the new youth pastor of the church started "talking about racial issues", reflecting on "how to make a difference" and "motivating me for leadership". As was the case at high school, so also on campus the university at the time did not offer students any form of discussion regarding racial issues or mentorship in leading for change.

In contrast to a segregated campus and town, at church Dawie found a mentor who "challenged him on the need for racial integration" and helped him shape "an ideal picture" of racial togetherness. As also was the case with his youth pastor at school, his mentorship now focused much on masculinity and teaching "not emotion, but wisdom" as value of manhood. Gaining confidence to "take responsibility and sacrifice to serve others as a man", Dawie grew increasingly frustrated with the chauvinistic cultures of masculinity taught at his residence, "hiding behind being gentleman, but still drinking, talking in degrading ways about woman behind their back".

It was time for Dawie to step into leadership.

7.4 Stepping into leadership (2009-2010)

Joining portfolio committees of the SRC during that year, Dawie witnessed the racial divide in campus politics. Well aware of the role of the political parties in sustaining campus conflict prior to and following Reitz, Dawie knew it mattered in politics whether one was perceived as loyal to one's racial in-group or not.

At the end of the term of office of the SRC, an appreciation event for all portfolio committee members was organised. Arriving at the barbeque, Dawie found several groups of either black or white students standing around, socialising only within their groups. Approaching the scene, Dawie saw a black friend he wanted to greet, but "sensing a heavy atmosphere" among the students, he "hesitated to do so, afraid to be seen as disloyal and not part of the white political group". Just for a moment though, as he decided not to submit to the racial codes of politics. He "walked over and greeted his friend anyway".

Disappointed at the racial nature of campus politics, Dawie decided to focus on and run for leadership in his residence. Shortly thereafter, he was elected as residence committee member for first-years – a most critical portfolio to build unity among the first-years and sustain the traditions of seniority and initiation of the residence.

However, at the same time the post-Reitz interventions adopted by the university started, with a new conversation regarding race and change.

A new conversation

As part of the post-Reitz interventions, the university appointed an external consulting team. The team had to "assist management in understanding and identifying the current obstacles related to the implementation of the residence integration policy, draw up proposals to enhance and successfully implement this integration policy, and implement these proposals to ensure successful integration within the 21 residences on the Main Campus in Bloemfontein".[116]

Starting its work on campus at the same time as Dawie was elected as residence committee member for first-years, the consultants introduced a broad programme of student dialogue, which were professionally facilitated as open discussion forums among students. Building momentum in the discussions, the dialogue forums first engaged with all Primes – chairpersons of campus residences together, "offering support and assisting their own discussions on challenges", then dialoguing with "smaller groups of black and white Primes" and also "meeting individually" with each Prime.

Participating in several of the dialogue opportunities, Dawie experienced "the first ever conversations on campus that offered leadership on diversity and race" and that "did not demand something of us, but supported us." Intentionally establishing conversations in racially mixed groups, the dialogue forums invited students to share their fears and concerns openly, but also to offer solutions, "motivating students to initiate new ideas, promote diversity and be the change on campus". In the smaller group discussion Dawie joined, students were asked, "How can we support you so that this [Reitz] never happens again," a shift to trust the initiative of students for change. In the individual discussion he joined, "The conversations focused on who you were as a person and a leader, beyond your racial group."

In this new conversation with black and white leaders, the slow work to disrupt racial knowledge that began in the mentoring relationship with his youth pastor found much-needed support, introducing Dawie to "strong black leaders" who "struggled with the same challenges and shared the same vision". Ready for senior leadership, Dawie was elected as Prime (chairperson) of his residence.

[116] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1003, retrieved 10/04/2015.

7.5 A turn: leaders that care (2009-2010)

As Dawie took office as chairperson of his residence, the university appointed new leaders in management, thereby filling the gap of leadership and mentorship for change he missed on campus. The appointment of the new and first black Rector and a new, younger, but also white and Afrikaans Dean of Students offered Dawie a different model of how to lead for racial integration. With their arrival, Dawie felt "finally leaders arrived that took control of and offered leadership [for change in residences]". Now, he could "see things visibly changing on campus" with "clear analysis of problems", but with the very important distinction that "students were asked what to do and informed about what was happening".

This was a different experience than before, because students "*is nie vir die wolwe gegooi nie* (were not thrown to the wolves)" so that what Dawie and other students experienced with management now contrasted with the sense of distance and institutional anger at management they claimed before. What were different for Dawie were the efforts of the new leaders "to build a relationship with us, to support and help students, but not to take over or force our will, because we see these pains and mistakes and want to go forward". In contrast to previous leaders, between the new Rector and Dean, Dawie "always saw a shared vision and commitment to students", even when they would have differing views. Sometimes the Rector "wanted to do something" and the Dean "would stand up for students, or the other way round".

His alternative experience of management was about more than "leadership with a clear vision for change" or proper student consultation. What was most significant for Dawie was the "real care for and interest in students" and the "uncompromising commitment to bring everyone along" the new leaders practised in managing change. This Dawie witnessed in the efforts of the Rector and Dean to "personally interact with students" and in the caring way they handled problems in meetings, "clearly drawing the line, but taking much time to discuss and explain the reasons why".

At one such event, a breakfast the Rector hosted for the Primes of residences, Dawie arrived expecting the "normal list of instructions on what they should implement on campus". To his surprise, instead of "addressing them, the Rector asked how they were doing, and how it was going in the residences".

For the first time a Rector "was really interested in them, in the difficulties they experience to lead change in their residences, but also in the smaller things of how it's going with songs and rugby". Here was leadership not focused "on reporting issues, but simply an enjoyable, open conversation at breakfast".

Finding mentorship to lead for change in his interactions now also with university leaders, and experiencing "trust in my own authority", Dawie modelled his own style of leadership on this experience, "talking, listening and explaining to people, and doing so with courage, not being afraid".

7.6 Leading for change (2010-2011)

Now recognising "a consistent vision and message" at church and on campus, Dawie decided to support the project for racial integration and change in residences in fully. Relying on his friendship with black Primes he was at church with, and finding "a special bond" among them due to similar struggles they faced for racial integration on campus, Dawie's first plan of action was to prepare for greater numbers of black first-year students. Making use of the opportunity offered by the intervention programme to appoint additional residence committee members introduced by the university that year, Dawie approached one of the black students who was in his first-year group and whom he had become great friends with to serve as committee member for first-years. Due to the role of this portfolio in sustaining traditional residence culture, this was a dramatic step, but one accepted by the residence.

Together they challenged the established culture of initiation.

Rallying his committee with "the new vision for *menswees* (humanity, of the university)", Dawie and his team took issue with "breaking people down to build togetherness" as method of initiation to build residence culture and pride. Facing opposition from senior students in the residence, they replaced the "sessions with first-years, where seniors shouted them down, with normal sessions where people were introduced to one another". Disrupting the culture of intimidation, they introduced "discussions with mentors and the residence committee" as programme for first-year orientation. They also broadened their orientation programme of *inters* – social interactions, to include not only white, but also all residences, specifically including black women's residences.

Wanting to make sure that the first *inter* with a black women's residence went well, Dawie decided to call together only the white students in his first-year group, "explaining to them what will happen and how I wanted them to behave". Immediately questioning himself, Dawie knew he had made a mistake out of his own racial bias, thinking by himself later that evening, "Why did I call only the white students together?"

Tired of the "tricks and false pretences and the racial agenda" of the political parties, Dawie refused political parties entry to the residence and cancelled the standing arrangements with the VF+ to recruit students in the residence. During that year, they also initiated a project to install a bust of one of the struggle icons of the country in the residence; proposed by his black friend then leading the first-year portfolio, it was a project with radical symbolic meaning for this traditional and established residence that was named for the Boer President of the former Orange (Free State) Colony.

While unable to complete this project during their term of office, it was later completed as a memorial garden celebrating this white and Afrikaner dissident lawyer and member of the communist party who defended struggle leaders, most notably former President Nelson Mandela at the Rivonia Trial, and who was a grandson of the former Boer President[117].

Struggling to take a stand

Considering the intensity of the changes they were introducing in the residence, Dawie was confused when "still getting into trouble" with the university for lack of change. Every now and again, Dawie and his team would be called to the Rector's office following a complaint about traditions of racial aggression in the residence.

One such incident followed a first-year student complaining to the Rector about a term, "*boesman* (bushman)", used among residents to refer to one another. A long-standing tradition among white students as a mark of endearment, it was common currency in the residence and never up for discussion, even though the term carries historical derogatory meaning for black students.[118]

[117] In consultation with Dawie the name of these figures were not included as a measure of confidentiality.
[118] Originally used in Dutch as part of colonial occupation, the term denotes insulting traits and intellectual inferiority of mixed race people in South Africa, and is one of the most opprobrious racial slurs of apartheid lexicon (Adhikari, 2005:28). See Adhikari, M. (2005). *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough, Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community*. Athens: Ohio University.

Unaware of its meaning as racial slur, Dawie did not see it as offensive, but as an "innocent part" of residence culture. Realising the racial micro-aggression it carried, Dawie "thanked the first-year for raising it" and immediately addressed and cancelled he tradition at the next house meeting. Dawie was gaining an awareness of complicity, deepening his "struggle to take a stand" and become a "sell-out" to his in-group.

His sense of the struggle for change deepened when, to his disappointment, many of the traditions Dawie and his team withdrew in the residence, the year thereafter were again reintroduced by the next residence committee. Sadly, this was similar to his experience at school, "where initiation practices in sport the year after he was captain were reintroduced in his teams".

However, all was not lost, because two years after his term as chairperson of the residence, the "first-year student he mentored during that time was elected as Prime of the residence, and they finally scrapped the traditional initiation practices".

The solution to achieve change on campus was to be found in authentic relationships that build common vision and values. Now witnessing a "consistent vision" among leaders, at church, in management and among students, Dawie at the end of his term as Prime, decided to move to a black campus residence to build relationships beyond race and for change on campus.

A new residence

As part of the extraordinary post-Reitz change initiatives, the Rector and his management team met with churches,, amongst others, also with students of Dawie's church, asking students to move voluntarily to new residences to support racial integration. Dawie accepted the challenge and decided to move to a black residence at the end of the year, especially as the university also indicated possible financial support to needy students who wished to support the process, but could not afford to continue their stay in campus accommodation.

With a younger brother also joining campus as a student, Dawie's parents could not carry them both, and Dawie had to find another way to fund his studies in the year to come. At first wanting only to support racial integration on campus, but now also with the promise of support to continue his studies, Dawie applied to move to the black men's residence struggling most with racial integration on campus.

As former Prime (chairperson) of the most established and traditionally white and Afrikaans residence on campus, his decision to move to the residence considered the political and militant stronghold for SASCO from where in the past black protest marches were launched, was a radical move. Some black students were sceptical, declaring, "You'll never make a difference [there]," while others were supportive of his vision for change.

Most importantly though, the residence committee of his new residence requested Dawie to first "come and explain his reasons" for wanting to move to their residence. Sharing his vision in the meeting, "they agreed on the same vision for racial integration in the residences," but also discovered that "we shared a similar focus on developing students in the residence and mature young men". Here, among this team of black student leaders in his new residence, Dawie found shared his own vision and values of meaningful masculinity and leadership for change.

Discussing the decision and the possibility to continue his studies because of this with his parents, Dawie was thankful for his mother's support, "who was happy that I would be able to continue and complete my studies". However, Dawie "felt hurt and deeply disappointed" by his father's response that continued with racist remarks, throughout the year asking, "How is it going with the *outas* or *hottas* (niggers); are you fixing them?"

White students also had a "mixed response" to Dawie's decision to move to a black residence. In the context of distance among black and white men's residences, the severe competition among them and the historical close association of residences with political parties, many were negative about his move. However, many also were positive since his decision was not the first of white students moving to a black residence.

In 2009, a group of white men from another church moved to a black residence in support of racial integration. While moving as a group, and to a residence not considered as politically militant as where Dawie was now moving to, it had shown it possible for white and black men to live together.

Most importantly, one of those students was appointed as the residence head of Dawie's new residence and could give him "advice on how to fit in". Here also Dawie could find a mentor for his most recent attempt at leader for change.

His new residence community welcomed Dawie with an "open spirit" and he "immediately participated fully as is normal for any residence". Assisting the residence to gain coaches and sponsorships in rugby and cricket, and helping with recruitment of white students, Dawie soon became known as "the white guy [from that residence]". The residence started "winning more games" and becoming competitive in campus life programmes.

Dawie discovered that the perception on campus of his new residence as the stronghold of black militancy was a case of "an image of [a residence] with a bite in public, while they were in fact simply normal and nice guys", much similar to what was the case for his former residence.

However, Dawie's initial sense of a welcoming spirit among members of the residence, and the formally declared trust and support of the residence did not translate to a "being part of the residence". Dawie "felt alone and isolated, with no one approaching or talking to me". He often felt "uncomfortable to ask advice or raise questions".

This changed when one night, as the university continued a "security raid in the residence", which was at intervals done as part of the security strategy in residences on campus in collaboration with residence committees. Inviting Dawie along as they inspected the residence, the Prime and senior students included Dawie in the group when afterward "smoking and talking together on the balcony". Solving somewhat his sense of isolation, though not completely, Dawie now started to feel a sense of community in his new residence.

Betrayal

However, Dawie's sense of isolation deepened when the financial support from the university he had hoped for did not materialise. Arriving at the end of the year, Dawie's student debt had grown so much that the finance department of the university was threatening legal action. Unable to approach his parents for support and not able to work and earn an income due to the amount of time required for his efforts in the residence, Dawie depended on financial support from the university. To crown it all, later that year the university approached Dawie to assist its efforts in change further by leading the establishment of a new and interracial off-campus residence, again promising possible financial support.

Again, the promise did not materialise and Dawie's sense of betrayal now was complete.

7.4 A turn: discovering complicity (2011)

In addition to leading in residences, throughout his career as student, Dawie attended, organised and became the most prominent leader of the PO10SEE camp, and SRC programme for student leadership development. Most senior student leaders attended the camp at some point or another during their career as student leader and the programme was one of the few spaces in campus where white and black students could comfortably interact and become friends. Attending the camp for the first time during his first year, in his second year, Dawie joined its organising team and the year thereafter served as a facilitator of the activities and discussions during the weekend programme.

During his term of office as Prime of his residence the SRC requested Dawie to lead the programme as a whole, not "even attending the camp". Now Dawie's leadership for change in residences was mirrored in leadership for change on campus. Originally labelled a "student development camp", the programme over time became a "drinking scene among senior students in residences", attended mostly by white, male students – in his estimation black students never made up more than a third of participants. Under his leadership the camp "returned its focus to leadership development" and the "racial profile of participants changed". Understanding the importance of building new generations of student leaders, Dawie ensured that the camp "focus on first-year students", recruiting those students "with the most potential to later on serve as leaders" to join the programme.

Now considered part of the post-Reitz interventions, he focused specifically building interracial cohorts to attend, intentionally "recruiting candidates at black and woman's residences" and "including also general and faculty student associations".

Dawie introduced formal "rules for selection of candidates", which was based on a system of nominations of potential by incumbent leaders in all student structures. Within two years, the programme became an informal requirement of sorts among students who wanted to be candidates for leadership positions on campus.

However, PO10SEE not only provided Dawie with a second major site of change leadership, but also presented a next movement in his journey with race and change.

Climbing through a hole

Passionate about and familiar with adventure activities as mode of experiential learning since high school, attending leadership development camps with his youth pastor, Dawie emphasised adventure activities as core to the curriculum of PO10SEE. Many of the adventure camps he attended at school, and later also facilitated, took place at the same adventure campsite that PO10SEE now were hosted every year. One of the activities was called the "*Ottergat* (Otter hole)". A natural hole the mountainside, participants would, as part of the adventure activities, crawl and tunnel in at one side of the *Ottergat*, through the darkness and out at the other side, having to "face and overcome their fears".

Remembering that many learners at school and students at PO10SEE related this experience as "the thing they remember most" for "teaching them about how the handled difficult situations", Dawie included the activity as part of a "revamped programme for the camp." So, when approaching the Dean of Students for financial assistance and discussing the programme with him, Dawie was surprised to find the Dean not sharing his excitement for the *Ottergat* and questioning the possibly unintended emotional impact of the exercise on students.

Unable to make sense of the Dean's concerns, Dawie decided to talk to students from previous camps about their experience of the activity. Shocked, Dawie discovered, "16 to 17 of the 20 people I interviewed were negative about *Ottergat*, some even remembering the experience with anxiety and fears of claustrophobia".

Dawie realised that most people rather kept quiet about the trauma of the experience, while the "one or two who liked it, and who came to tell me so" only confirmed what he wanted to believe. Dawie recognised that different people experience the things "he accepted as normal" differently and that without realising it, *Ottergat* was using the same methodology in teaching as what he rejected in the initiation traditions of his residence – using fear to "break people down to again build them up",

Violence of a t-shirt

As part of Dawie's efforts to revamp PO10SEE, he also undertook a rebranding of the camp, most notably in the design of the camp attire – t-shirts and the like that the organising team and facilitators would wear during the programme.

Wanting to symbolise "the man of integrity who are strong, but also remains humble in prayer and in dependence on God", Dawie was excited with the design showing a marine soldier in battle gear and guns, standing on his knees, poised to leap forward that would be printed on the organising team's t-shirts. Replete with "dog-tags printed with your name" and a military-type cap, he considered a fun and popular way to illustrate his growing sense of a new masculinity.

However, discussing also the new designs with the Dean of Students, Dawie felt angry as the Dean questioned the designs for the "underlying military messages of guns and war" of the design, saying, "This is not the type of values you want to associate the camp with."

While the Dean did not demand he change it, Dawie decided to "look at the design from his perspective" and realised that "if a first-year arrives at the camp and see these senior students showing off all these military stuff, they would not necessarily be open to the experience". He changed the designs. Dawie now was awakening to moments of complicity in culture amidst leading for change on campus.

7.8 Finding new meaning (2012)

Increasingly leading across racial divides at church, with black and white students joining his cell group and youth outreaches, in residences on campus with black peers and at PO10SEE with black friends sharing a vision of a new masculinity, Dawie became increasingly confused with racial identity. No longer "certain of what is black or white", identity for Dawie became "grey", which he considered "a good thing, because in the past what was right, was a white thing".

With black friends and leaders, Dawie now focused on and could identity with aspirations to "be young, strong men and leaders, rather than to be called whitey or *Boer* (farmer)". Associating the racism of his home community and father with the traditional label used for Afrikaans men in South Africa, Dawie's dissociation with Boer was also a rejection of what he considered a failed masculinity. At the heart of a new perspective on his identity was his faith community, which taught him, "We were not created to be separate or to belittle someone [as a mark of strength]," – a far cry from the traditional and white, Afrikaans institutional cultures of his home community, its mainline churches and his first campus residence, as much as from traditional racial politics of country and campus.

Black men do that

Unaware of how far he had progressed on the road of a new sense of self, Dawie became aware of his shift in thinking when a black friend during a church outreach jokingly told him, "You've got black manners." At some point during their daily activities, in an unguarded moment, Dawie had spat on the ground, not realising that Lerato, a black woman and senior student leader, was around. Surprised at his spitting, she told him "black men do that".

Equally dumbfounded, Dawie thought to himself, "No, that is what [all] men do," realising that he had shifted from reading what people do in racial terms to finding "alternative and new meaning".

Making new sense

At the heart of Dawie's shift away from the established codes and cultures around him, was his sense that "men were cowards" for not willing to deal with injustice around them, "not willing to sacrifice themselves to help those in need, to take responsibility and do the right thing". For Dawie this was most prominent in how white people now talked about apartheid, as if "Before 1994 it was right, but now it was wrong and we must just forget about it." For him this was tantamount to "assaulting someone and when you're discovered, suddenly you say we must just forget about it". The institutional anger at the university management and its process of racial integration Dawie took hold of in his first year in residence culture at the time was now replaced with anger at continued white ignorance.

Owning a new sense of self and confidence as leader for change, Dawie now often found himself in conflict among his peers and in his home community when "people claim the past is past and we should forget about it". Countering such statements, Dawie would argue, "For those [black] people, who lived during apartheid, were beaten up by white people and for many years did not get any advantages, for them it is not the past." Always attempting not to show his anger, but "reasonably help people understand that it is not right what they are saying".

Dawie now considered himself someone who brings white and black together; someone in-between, but part of a new community defined by values, not by race.

Building bridges

Agreeing with the label of "bridge-building" as suitable description of his life as student leader on campus, Dawie did not consider his life an exception to the rule among his peers, but as one of many "students who want to bring white and black together". What set his experience apart was "the privilege of having mentors who influenced me, even during my first two years on campus when a learned to question racial integration". For Dawie, this was the essence of his ability and confidence to build bridges between black and white, mentorship throughout his life that showed him an alternative to what he learned and lived through in traditional institutional cultures.

Mentoring students to build bridges now became Dawie's aspiration personally and professionally – to teach students and young people through leadership development initiatives challenge established ways of thinking and doing, bring people together beyond race and lead for change.

CHAPTER 8

ALETTA'S STORY, A STRUGGLE WITH SHAME (2003-2012)

"How would I have felt if they were all white, doing the same work, the same hours and wearing the exact same clothes? I started to grasp my thinking about race, because I would've done more and handled them better if they were white."

Aletta identifies as female, Christian, white and Afrikaans[119] from middleclass background and growing up in the rural area of the Free State Province. She was born in 1989, and her parents moved from Johannesburg to a prominent mining town in this agricultural province while she was still young. Here they offered her and her sister a sheltered life growing up, which they could do as part of the more privileged and conservative white community. This was a community where racism was part of everyday life and the racial hierarchy of white privilege and black poverty was considered the norm –derogatory racial terms, such as "*kaffer*", were in everyday use and not questioned at any point in during her early life.

While her parents were not racist, they also "were not activists", remaining largely neutral and silent on political matters and raising Aletta intentionally without prescribing to her what she must think or aspire to in life and supporting her fully in all her endeavours. Her family did not have many family friends in the local community, while also distanced from their extended family.

Aletta struggles to remember much of her early life. While videos and pictures were not "a major thing", her mother wrote letters to her daughters to discuss issues, which led Aletta to think her struggle for memory of her early signals "a coping mechanism". For Aletta, the silence at home on societal issues reflected also the silence on issues of race and justice at school and elsewhere in her life growing up. Nowhere in her life growing up were matters of race or history discussed.

Still, Aletta succeeded well at school, at an early stage – at primary school – serving as deputy head girl, often invited to and hosting birthday parties with friends from school.

[119] The term 'Afrikaans' here names the language, but indicates also Afrikaner ethnic-cultural identity and forms part of the post-apartheid attempts of the Afrikaner to develop as a linguistic, rather than racially defined community, especially so among Born-Free Afrikaner youth. See Loubser, L. (2014) *Afrikaner identity in the born-free generation: Voortrekkers, Farmers and Fokofpolisiekar*. Master's dissertation, Johannesburg: Wits.

A different church

Aletta's family was alternative in one major sense: they were not members of the mainline Afrikaans churches that were a prominent part of white, Afrikaans community life. With her parents, Aletta was member of an English-speaking and interracial church congregation, even to the extent of becoming a Sunday school teacher with mostly black kids in her class at a later stage, in high school. At Sunday school, she met few, if any, of her peers and she never became friends with those she did. Only on campus, once she had moved to a black residence, would she again meet with one of the kids from her Sunday school class.

Outside of church, no spaces or opportunities were available for white and black children to interact. As with her high school, her primary school also had very few black learners, so that Aletta for the most part had white friends. Unaware at the time of the significance of an interracial church in a conservative rural town, Aletta did not find her experience at church strange, but simply as the "way it was".

From a young age, Aletta remembers being concerned with and vocal about "unfairness", refusing to "go with the flow". At primary school she was especially concerned with the distance between richer and poorer learners and would make an effort to invite friends from other classes and poorer families to her birthday party, and join theirs.

8.1 High school (2003-2007)

Aletta was enrolled at a traditional, Afrikaans high school known for its achievements in academics and sport, but not for racial integration, with "less than 10% black students". The black learners in her class whom she was friendly with, were also her classmates at primary school and they together progressed to high school. However, in her estimate, her church community was more than 80% black, so that, different to her white, Afrikaans peers, she grew equally comfortable with black and English-speaking friends. Yet, due to so few of her peers forming part of their congregation, this alternative experience did not continue at school or establish intimate friendship across racial barriers. As was the case at primary school, at high school Aletta would also not be confronted with the harsh realities of racial discrimination or expected to reflect on socio-political issues, "not remembering any racial incidents at school".

Still, her alternative experiences of a non-racist home and an interracial church, as well as her established sense of fairness made her acutely aware of racist language and behaviour among her friends. She refused to use the racist language practised as normal among her white friends and the broader community. Often she would challenge them when a friend calls a black learner [a racist name], asking, "Would you have behaved differently if that person were white?" Her initiative to challenge racist attitudes among her friends intensified to such an extent that, at one occasion, she "playfully slapped a [white] friend in the face" for using racist language.

Her friends learned to moderate their language in her presence.

Aletta did not consider her challenges to prejudice an activist response to racial injustice, but at the time considered it only as unfair and disrespectful treatment of other people – she did not reflect on the racial meaning of what she was doing.

Known among her peers as a "progressive" person, getting along very well with her teachers and doing well in all aspects of school life, Aletta became a star leader in her community. Serving as representative in class and in religious and cultural associations throughout all her grade years and selected for school sports teams, in her final year she was elected as deputy head girl, deputy captain of her school's hockey team and appointed captain of a provincial hockey team.

Aletta thrived in the sheltered space, "the comfort zone" of her school and community, successfully negotiating its cultural codes, and y*et al*so aware of distances among her peers and confident to challenge inhumane behaviour among her friends. However, with her success as leader at school came opportunities to experience a world outside of the familiar of her traditional, Afrikaans environment, to challenge "the comfort zone" that school was for her.

Meeting the outside world

As an executive member of the ATKV[120] branch at her school, Aletta attended an annual youth summit for senior school learners of the national organisation in her final year at school. As part of the programme, speakers, amongst others, also addressed the summit on and facilitated a discussion on the politics and history.

[120] The cultural organisation, *Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging* – Afrikaans Language and Culture Association.

Not only was this the first such discussion she would participate in, but it struck her that the speaker on politics invited them to state their views, declaring, "We will discuss and fight about the issues, and you'll have different views, and if you do, speak up!" This openness to debate and comfort with different views were at odds with the silence at home and at school. Aletta felt the urge for more debate on issues that matter.

As captain of her provincial hockey team, sports quotas[121] introduced earlier already to school sports confronted Aletta in a more tangible way with the legacies of racial discrimination. This selection of black players was a difficult and hotly contested issue at school and in the white Afrikaans community, especially since the system meant some players would "not get in". This "indoctrinated" the white players that they "always believed the selection of black players was undeserved". So strong were the distrust of the system and the anger against it at school that Aletta would not openly raise her concerns with how people questioned, "whether the black players deserved to be in the team". She would secretly make an effort to "pull them into the team", during tournaments spend time with black players "sitting and talking in their rooms" and enjoy when "they do well and the other (white) players then see them [as equals]".

While remaining naively unaware of racial hierarchy and distance at school, these experiences so strongly influenced her awareness of racism that Aletta in particular requested a non-racist roommate in her application letter for first-year placement in a campus residence. She then challenged her first-year roommate in this regard as she arrived in their room, asking, "*Is jy 'n rassis* (Are you a racist)?"

8.2 Arriving on a culturally sheltered university campus (2008)

With an older sister on campus, Aletta gleaned encouraging news about student life, with "the Vryheidsfront Plus (VF+) doing well on campus, winning SRC elections and with a woman elected as president of the SRC, which was a big thing on campus". Not only did this confirm to her a continuation of her familiar home environment, but it also confirmed openness for woman leaders to achieve on campus, as she aspired to become.

[121] Formal quotas to achieve demographic representivity were adopted as part of the post-apartheid transformation programme for sport at all levels of competition, most notably for provincial and national teams. See Höglund K. and Sundberg, R. (2008) *Reconciliation through Sports? The case of South Africa*, Third World Quarterly, Vol. 29:4, 805-818.

However, different to her sister who focused largely on her studies, Aletta was particularly excited to join residence life at one of the best performing women's residences on campus – the same residence her sister also joined. She relished the promise of the full student experience from the first-year "*insout*" (hazing), to the camaraderie among fellow residents her sister had talked about at home.

A familiar welcome

Not at all worried about hazing, Aletta was familiar with hazing at school and lived through hazing on "several occasions since Grade 6", even as a newly elected member of the learner representative council in high school. She expected nothing less from campus residence culture, feeling secure in her familiarity with the practice and protected by her knowledge of "what is acceptable things to do to build unity among the first-years" and in her confidence to "call out stupid things".

Still, as first-years they were expected to learn the names of all the senior students, sit on the floor during house meetings, do telephone duty, not use alcohol and adhere to a curfew for first-year students from ten o'clock at night. Occasionally senior students would shout at the first-years during the orientation programme, but she "knew they did not really mean it."

While sometimes uncomfortable, this was what Aletta "expected from university life" and she considered it an important part of building residence pride and togetherness.

Her expectations proved correct as her residence offered her a continued and familiar sheltered space, similar to high school and her home environment – Afrikaans and Christian, with the motherly figure of an older and deeply caring white matron as resident house warden. She could recognise all the familiar social codes of her past, and as a first-year in 2008, she found herself in a normalising environment with white and black peers, similar to her abnormal experience at her home church. However, this normality for her was in fact an abnormality for her residence.

This year, 2008, was the first year of racially integrated placements in campus residences, which added a new dynamic to residence culture. The previous year a small number of senior black students moved to the residence, but her cohort was the first group with significant numbers of black students.

Now the established way of doing things needed revision, such as some students not understanding the Afrikaans used as medium of communication in the residence. This caused anxiety for the residence committee who had to design solutions for themselves to solve the daily challenges of racial integration. For the most part black students were expected to join in the "normal programme of the residence", while the residence committee would translate on the side into English what was communicated to accommodate (black) students not familiar with Afrikaans.

Due to her earlier alternative experiences at her church, Aletta was equally comfortable with her black and white peers in residence and on campus, focusing on and building "real relationships with everyone". For Aletta, it was not a case of "I'm white and you're black", but rather a case of "I know your name."

This also included her roommate whom she had challenged on the first day by asking, "Are you a racist?" Unbeknown to her at the time, her roommate's brother was in the Reitz residence and would later be the elected as the first chairperson of Heimat Mannerheim[122] – the privately run student residence established by and for the residents of the Reitz residence where the Reitz video had originated and which was closed down by the university later that year.

This relationship was significant for Aletta, because through her roommate she learned about the anguish of white farming families faced with farm murders that plagued rural communities.[123]

However, within a matter of weeks, Aletta would also learn about the perversity of white racism, leaving her with knowledge of black and white trauma, having to make sense of both as never before in her life. Familiar life on campus would be disrupted with the protest action taken by the executive committees of all campus residences against management's handling of the process of racial integration, followed by the trauma of the Reitz video.

[122] See http://www.presreitzheimat.co.za/agtergrond.html, retrieved on 09/26/2015.
[123] White farm murders form an important part of "the construction of the Afrikaner community as embattled and systematically oppressed" in post-apartheid South Africa. See Verwey, C. and Quayle, M. (2012) Whiteness, racism and Afrikaner identity in post-apartheid South Africa, *African Affairs*, Vol. 111:445, 551-557.

8.3 Reitz and the fear of revenge (2008)

Two days prior the residence committees' protest action against management[124] her residence committee had met with their whole residence, including the first-years, explaining the reasons for the protest action, but without "inciting the residence to join the protest".

From a distance, Aletta observed the student leaders camping out with tents on the front lawn of the main buildings on campus, which seemed "funny at the time". Within days, the protest actions of the leaders were overshadowed and all but forgotten as the Reitz video and subsequent disruption of campus took centre stage.

The "electricity in the air" first made Aletta notice something out of the ordinary as she walked through the Student Union Centre on the day the Reitz video became publicly known. "Something was going on" and there was a "buzz among students". Unaware of the video as she walked across campus, she noticed more university security staff than usual and several police officers moving among students. Worriedly, she hurried back to her residence, where the residence committee soon called the residence together and informed them, "Reitz had made a bad video."

No one had yet seen the video, but for one of the senior black students in the residence, who informed them "it was very bad". Everyone rushed to see the video and although the white and black students in the residence responded differently to the video, Aletta did not sense any "underlying change in the atmosphere among the girls in the residence – there was no vibe among us". For her black peers, the video was a terrible thing, and, while white students also considered it awful, they rather debated the technicality of what was shown in the video, asking, "Can you see and hear they grab a bottle [to pour juice into the food mix and pretend to, but not actually urinate in it]," claiming the same argument the Reitz four also would use in their defence. For Aletta, the white students did not read the video in terms of "humanness", while she was struck with disbelief and could not "accept that the students would actually do something like this". However, at the time she did not fully grasp the meaning and real injustices of the video, but became frustrated with the continued and intense media attention, feeling, "We look bad [as a university]" – what media messages implied about students of the university were not who she was and what she thought about the university.

[124] See a more detailed description of the protest action as outlined by Thabelo in Chapter 6, pp. 146-154.

They will bomb and rape us

Panic had taken hold of campus in the days after the video had been exposed. Soon violent protests would erupt and rumours of revenge attacks against white students spread across campus. Online rumours claimed that the next-door black men's residence was planning to "bomb their residence in retaliation" for Reitz. Students coming from classes that were disrupted by groups of protesting black students claimed that threats were shouted, "you [white woman] would be raped", also in retaliation for the video.[125] The residence committee closed the residence, while additional police patrols were arranged to safeguard the residence. Several students decided rather to move off-campus and returned to the residence only a few days later. However, within days, the atmosphere on campus had "returned to normal" and Aletta felt comfortable and safe, moving around among black and white students without fear.

Aware of the "always-present" glare of the media, the rest of her first year was overshadowed by Reitz. As a newcomer to the campus and town, at the time, Aletta could not yet know how deeply life on campus and in town was racially divided[126] and she could not fully appreciate the gravity of Reitz.

She would awaken to the reality of the racial divide and the injustice of Reitz only in the year to come, her second year, as she stepped into leadership.

8.4 Stepping into leadership (2008-2009)

Being good friends with several of the VF+ student leaders on campus, and aspiring to campus leadership, Aletta joined several portfolio committees of the SRC in her second year. This introduced her to the racial and segregated nature of campus politics. She witnessed "their negativity about management, fighting, fighting, and fighting with management" and could make up her mind that she "disagreed with what they were fighting for". She questioned how leadership functioned on campus, asking, "How do we [as leaders] find a balance when fighting for our interests," and rejected the "mass thinking taught by political parties on campus."

[125] See http://152.111.1.88/argief/berigte/beeld/2008/03/19/GO/5/oosvrystaat21maart.html, retrieved 09/26/2015. See also Jansen's (2016: 185) analysis of letters to the press in this regard.
[126] See a detailed outline of segregation as reported by participant Jack in Chapter 5, page 136-143.

She knew that she wanted to do it differently and later that year she would get the opportunity to do so when elected as Prime (chairperson) of her residence. This was a significant achievement since second-year students were traditionally only elected to executive committee portfolios, while only senior students who had already served on the executive committee were considered for and elected to the chair of the residence.

However, as Aletta took up the reigns of leadership in her residence, a radical shift was taking place in leadership on campus.

8.5 A turn: Encountering black leaders (2009)

The racial profile of senior leaders on campus rapidly shifted from white to black – an important signal of change on campus. Not only was the first black Rector of the university appointed and inaugurated during that weeks prior to and after her election as chairperson of the residence, but also for the first time, SASCO, the political student organisation advancing black student interests on campus, won the SRC elections and the first black SRC president took office. These changes also took place in the intimate space of her residence, where her residence warden retired at the end of that year, with a young black woman appointed to take her place. While these events were historic for the campus community for many reasons, for Aletta it was dramatic, as she would immediately interact with black leaders that won her admiration with their integrity and moral courage.

Prior to her election as Prime of her residence, Aletta observed and interacted with black student leaders for the most part only in the political conflict of the SRC, an environment with an institutional culture of leadership she found disappointing. However, following her election this would change as she joined the development programme for newly elected student leaders.

Overhauled as part of the change interventions following Reitz, the programme focused on dialogue among leaders about institutional matters, but also facilitated personal story telling among participants.

Meeting the newly appointed black Rector at the event for the first time, Aletta was initially discouraged by the Rector's message on "counter-cultural leadership"[127] for change that the university needed from students, especially as his inputs included the announcement of a new programme to appoint additional black or white residence committee members to support racial integration in the residences – a programme that formed part of the post-Reitz interventions.

This too much reminded Aletta of the "quota system in sport" at school – feeling that it was dangerous to risk students feeling "did not deserve to be there". Her view of management was not off to a good start with the new Rector repeating what student leaders in their combined protest the previous year, and the SRC in its conflict with management this year so vehemently complained about, "simply instructing students what to do, announcing what will happen and not talking to us".

Without realising it, with her fellow leaders Aletta now was ready to adopt and continue the institutionally angry relationship between student leaders and management. However, what was to follow in the rest of the weekend programme would stop her drift towards anger.

Memories shared

As part of the programme student leaders from different residences were invited to complete a "timeline" exercise, plotting and posting "the major positive and negative life events of their own lives" along with everyone else on the wall of the hall. The facilitator then reviewed the time line of memories with the whole group. Talking through the many life events posted, participants could see how major historical events affected everyone's lives and how similar types of individual life events happened for different people at the same time – revealing the similarities of human experience for black and white.

Aletta was struck by the similarity of experiences posted on the time line of all the leaders. "You saw that for one leader her dad died and it was a terrible ordeal, so also your dad died and it was a terrible ordeal for you, and you discover we're not as different as we think, our pain is the same, because pain is pain." However, the posts also revealed the distance of experiences in apartheid.

[127] Countercultural leadership refers to "leading all humanity" as opposed to conventional leadership that values "only the tribe", amongst others. See http://www.news24.com/Archives/Witness/I-am-at-peace-20150430, retrieved 09/27/15.

For the first time, Aletta heard of traumatic apartheid violence. One such memory posted on the wall was of "the police bursting into her house when she was little and arresting and taking away her uncle". Having never discussed apartheid at school, and as "white students unaware of what happened", such memories shared in their timeline were a jarring experience, because "you've never heard about this, and here a student talks about it".

'Our pain is the same'

The exercise continued, "Taking it deeper into our own stories, so that we could see people's pain." Divided into smaller groups consisting of black and white leaders, each student had to share their life story in their group, without debating or questioning the narratives shared. Listening to the life story of a senior black leader who was elected to the SRC and who she considered "a strong woman, driven to achieve in life", Aletta was amazed to discover how much this young woman had overcome, "not knowing who her father is and with a family that has not once come together".

In the very personal stories of the black students in her group, for the first time, Aletta gained insight into and respect for the real-life experiences of black students, appreciating that "we are alike" and that our "pain is the same". The experience shifted Aletta's understanding of the process for change to such an extent that she decided not to fight the new interventions announced earlier by the Rector.

Next, the leaders together discussed the institutional vision and values of the university, reflecting on the Rector's call for "counter-cultural leadership" and attempting to agree to a common sense of purpose. As a cohort of leaders, they "established a special bond" that could change campus.

Not racial quotas

Motivated to support the process for racial integration in her residence, Aletta with gusto worked to recruit black leaders to join her residence committee, but remained sensitive to the distrust of racial integration that the quota system at school caused among white communities. She opted to "choose the leaders by herself", taking her time to find "the right people for the right portfolio" and "thoroughly discussing the reasons for and goals of the programme" to appoint additional committee members.

She was convinced that the success of racial integration in the residence depended on students not questioning if any of the additional members "deserved to be there". With a strong team of leaders who carried the support of her residence, Aletta undertook difficult, but critical change initiatives in the residence – redesigning songs, residence events and rules of seniority. The most difficult of these changes were the changes to the "*kamer-skiet-stelsel* (system for room selection) and placement in corridors. This was a points-based system used in residences to allocated rooms to students for the next year, with senior students normally having first choice, resulting in racially grouped rooms. It was also an informal practice among residence committees to allocate rooms to black or white students in different corridors, leading to racially separated corridors in a residence. Aletta challenged these practices, changing the systems in her residence.

Collaborating with chairpersons of black woman's residences, she undertook recruitment of black students to move to her residence, and assisted them in their recruitment of white students. Together they would achieve what then seemed impossible.

Leading alone

Nevertheless, the road ahead was tough, as she had to lead her team and the residence largely on her own. The sheltered space of familiar intimacies she had come to know and trust since her first year was making way for the challenging interactions of a new racial diversity in the residence. Nowhere was this loss for Aletta more intense than the retirement of her residence head.

As part of the traditional system of full-time, stay-in matrons at women's residences, the residence head offered students a close mentor and parental figure to depend on for emotional support, as much as for practical advice on dealing with difficulties in leading a residence. Proudly known by the traditional Afrikaans title, "*tannie*" (aunt), the residence head was a matriarch of sorts, representing the continuation of white, Afrikaans and Christian culture Aletta knew at school. None of this was true for her new residence head, who was young, black, not Afrikaans and new to the role of residence warden. A vibrant person who enjoyed socialising and preferred informal interaction with her students, she disrupted the established role of the residence head, "often making noise, enjoying alcohol and socialising with friends at the residence – the complete opposite to the *tannie*".

Unfamiliar with the established culture and systems of the residence, her new residence head would often ask Aletta for advice in dealing with issues. Not being appointed full-time to the position and working in another capacity at the university during the day as well, the residence head left several duties of the daily running of the residence to Aletta. The guidance, easy communication and emotional support a newly elected chairperson would traditionally depend on, were absent. Aletta had to find her own way through the struggles of racial integration in her residence and she came to depend on her friendship with the Primes of black residences.

Still, Aletta could accept the difficulties as she noted that "much more than before the black girls felt comfortable to approach and spend time with the residence head", while she respected her residence head for accepting the position to become the first black residence head and a white residence on campus – often called a "sell-out and a coconut" by black political groups on campus.

Pain of our past

Aletta's partnership with her black peers gained new depth as they started their term of office that year. As part of an annual "Primes liaison tour" arranged by the SRC and meant to build team spirit among the chairperson of the all the campus residences, Aletta and her fellow student leaders toured the South African Constitutional Court and Apartheid Museum. Lead by the Dean of Students, the group of leaders debriefed students on their visits to these sites and the histories they represent. For the first time Aletta felt "confronted with the real history, with facts and images" of racial injustice during apartheid. Then a traumatic experience, it played an important part of becoming aware also of the racial injustice on campus and her responsibility to lead for change.

Even more so, she started questioning her own motives in responding to black peers, "Was she racist when feeling uncomfortable with physical contact with a black male friend or simply reserved and uncomfortable with all men?" Her questions would later turn to "feelings of shame" when discovering her own racial stereotyping as she moved to a black residence.

However, the shifts in Aletta's awareness and thinking on issues of race achieved in the new experiences of togetherness and history with her black fellow leaders would be most vividly illustrated in her thinking about Reitz.

'If they were our mothers'

With the knowledge of the very personal life stories of her black peers and the similarity of experiences and struggles she and her friends had been through, Aletta could perceive the workers in the video as black students did as the older and respected mothers of the community who they were. Horrified at what was done to the workers, Aletta now asked, "What if they were our mothers; what if they were white?" Her original disbelief regarding the incident, and frustration with the continued media attention it received made way for the horror of the inhumanness perpetrated in Reitz. The Reitz students had done the unthinkable. Deeply under the impression that there was a need to address racism among white students, but aware that "it was a delicate thing to change attitudes in the residence", she decided not to confront racism "head-on", but rather change perceptions in a subtle way. She decided to focus on the relationship between students and workers in her residence – the cleaners and kitchen staff. In this intimate relationship, she saw potential to address racism due to the established familiarity between students and workers as was best represented in the slang name white students used for black workers – *squeezas*.[128]

Since the Reitz video, students were "prohibited from calling workers *squeezas*". Furthermore, the intimate contact between the white students and the black workers made way for more formal interactions – specifically to white students in her residence, the cleaners and kitchen staff had now "become invisible". Aletta saw that "when the students could not greet the workers using *squeeza* anymore, it often resulted in them not greeting the workers at all since they did not know their names". For Aletta it became a "*hartsaak*" (a matter of the heart, a deep commitment) to right this wrong, and it was "part of making the video to reintroduce the workers to the House so that they could be called by their names".

A video to right the wrongs

Aletta opted for a project to produce a video to showcase and honour the role the workers played as part of the residence community. This was to be screened at a grand function where the workers would each be presented with "gifts and an official residence jacket" – something that had never been done and that in her mind would dramatically shift how white students perceived the black workers of the community.

[128] Meant as endearment, the term in actual fact confirmed and established racial and class power hierarchies between the white students and black workers similar to the hierarchy between white farmers and black farm workers – demeaning workers as "something to be squeezed" (Jansen 2016:22)

Where the Reitz video violated the dignity of workers and aggravated racial distance, this project would honour the workers and promote togetherness in her residence. After discussing the project with her residence head and committee and gaining their support, Aletta launched the project with gusto, designing the plot and storyline of the video and recording footage of the workers as they went about their daily duties. Wanting to keep it a surprise for them, the project was not fully discussed with the workers, who were unaware of the footage recorded as they were working, though brief interviews followed thereafter with each worker. At the time not realising the full implication of recording footage without their knowledge or permission, Aletta completed the first version of the video and tested it with the black committee members of her residence and her residence head. All seemed to respond positively, "smiling all the time through the video" with her residence head "loving it".

However, for good measure Aletta also decided to show the video to and discuss the project with the newly appointed Dean of Students, who was white, Afrikaans and male. To her disappointment, the Dean advised against the video, at length discussing the "underlying messages of scenes and how the workers are portrayed", proposing an alternative programme in partnership with the unions and all residences. Discouraged, she decided to cancel the project, feeling, "I just do not have the energy to arrange another project, while this video carried all my best intentions [to address white students' racism]." She could not make sense of the Dean's concerns.

Nevertheless, the questions raised by the Dean stayed with her so that, soon thereafter when visiting at home, she discussed the project with her parents, exploring her "real intentions" and "What she would do differently if the workers were white." Then she came across the novel, *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, which tells the stories of experiences of racism of black domestic workers in the town of Jackson, Mississippi of 1963,[129] such as that "black people can't use the same toilet as white people" – a big theme in the novel. In the stories, Aletta recognised similarities with apartheid South Africa, but also with how domestic workers were still treated in the white community, with "separate plate, mug and cutlery for the maid and an outside toilet for the workers". Aletta realised that what she wanted to achieve with the video was to expose the underlying racial meaning of "how we [white students] were doing things, often not even greeting cleaners as we walk past them in the residence corridors".

[129] Stockett, K. (2009) *The Help*. New York: Penguin. See http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/10/movies/the-help-spans-two-worlds-white-and-black-review.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0, retrieved on 09/28/2015.

Even worse, for her, this was also true for her own family, who did not strictly enforce these micro-aggressions, but still repeated all the cultural practices of the white community – it was the way things were always done. Aletta, for instance, often used the outside toilet that at other families were strictly for the workers' use, and it was "just as beautiful as the one inside", but still she had never "questioned why things were done this way in the first place". So complete was her discovery of the complicity of her family in the racial hierarchy of her community that she felt the need to protest the accepted ways of doing at home, asking herself what would happen if she prepared and "served a meal for everyone together", using the same dishes and cutlery.

8.6 A turn: dramatic trust (2010)

Struggling during her term of office to find practical solutions for racial integration in the residence, Aletta increasingly felt frustrated that the initiative and drive for change on campus were not with student leaders, but with the management of the university. It often remained a struggle for management to bring student leaders along in the process, with the all-familiar pushback by political parties and men's residences continuing as before. She also saw a disjuncture between the direction set for transformation by the Rector and senior leaders of the university, and the actual operational work done by administrative staff working with residences – "sitting in meetings, not making sense and talking about different things all the time".

The formal meetings with university managers to coordinate work in the residences were at odds with the dynamic partnerships she formed and cultivated with fellow Primes from black and white residences throughout the year. Among one another they found the support and answers to daily challenges of leading in the residences, which the university staff could not provide – they were doing it, and succeeding.

Gaining in confidence, Aletta felt that as students they needed not only to support, but also to lead the projects for change on campus, especially as management also did not seem "to know exactly what to do". In preparation for the upcoming elections of residence committees for the next term of office, the Dean of Students opened a debate on and argued the need to continue for a second year with the extraordinary measure to appoint additional black or white residence committee members in support of racial integration in residences.

Student leaders had mixed feelings in this regard, with white residences in most cases unsupportive of the intervention, and black residences for most part agreeing with the proposal. At the heart of the general unhappiness with the intervention was the concern that "residences are forced" to integrate their committees racially, creating doubt in residences about the legitimacy of their leaders. Aletta also disagreed with the plan, but for another reason. She was convinced that "her residence was ready to do it on its own", to elect a racially integrated committee democratically without a policy position that demanded it. At a meeting with the Rector to discuss the interventions for change in the year to come, she decided to raise her concern, with dramatic consequences.

As the Rector requested the students views on the recommendation of the Dean for another year of additional committee membership, Aletta argued, "We know what you want, but you do not know how to do it. Leave the transformation of the residences to us. Let us do it."[130] Unexpectedly, the Rector agreed, rejecting the proposal for another year of additional committee members and so declaring his trust in her ability to achieve change in the residence. "Opening his heart" to the students in the meeting, the Rector commented that this was a "difficult decision as he trusts the judgement" of his Dean of Students. This hit Aletta "like a ton of bricks", realising that "he trusts us", even going against the opinion of his Dean of Students. Now the initiative and ownership to achieve racial integration were with students, Aletta realised, "If my committee is not racially diverse, it's my responsibility; we must do it for ourselves; now we cannot make mistakes."

8.7 Leading for change (2011-2012)

The decision of the Rector to trust her to lead change was a culmination for Aletta of her journey to knowledge of the past, of her black peers and of the pervasive racism of her home community and campus. Now she was an author of change on campus, ready to lead for change. For Aletta, white students carried a special burden to "reach out and do something", rather than continue to complain and claim, "Black residences do not want to change, but we are forced to change." First, she needed to convince her white peers to take ownership of the project for change, helping especially the white men's residences to appreciate the similar difficulties black residences faced in racial integration. Rather than defend their own, they now all needed to work "for black success".

[130] Jansen, 2016:126.

A new residence

Aware of the difficulties black residences faced in racial integration, with "white students unwilling to take up placement in a black residence", Aletta decided to support racial integration on campus by applying to move to a black residence. Supported in her decision by her black peers with whom she developed close partnerships during their terms as chairpersons, she was accepted and moved into one of the residences struggling most with recruiting and retaining white students. Considered a radical move at the time, the response to her move was overwhelmingly supportive, with her own residence "trusting her to do the right thing", her parents supporting her decision and the leaders and students in her new residence welcoming her with open arms. Only later would she hear about "negative comments made among our broader family" about her move to a black residence, which "surprised and upset her".

As a senior student in the residence, she would assist the residence committee to "recruit white first-year students, contacting those offered places in the residence directly and welcoming them to the residence". Her role was to offer the white students and their families a "sense of belonging" to overcome any fears of placement in a black residence. During the year, she mentored the white students to ease their adjustment to campus and residence life. As member of the residence, Aletta participated in the programme of the residence, not only "discovering vast differences" to white residence culture, but also again confronted with her own racial prejudices. She remembered her initial feelings of shame when she realised that her new residence was a lot cleaner than the one she had led the year before. There was a perception among white students that the black residences would be dirtier – a racial stereotype she was unaware of, but alerted to when becoming part of a black residence community.

It was not an easy time, because as much as everyone welcomed her in the residence, "no-one reached out to her" on his or her own initiative, "only talking to her when she first reached out". Sensitive to not "seem racist", Aletta was more reserved and did not feel at ease to be "completely open". She needed to adjust to very different ways of doing, from "loud music and the bathrooms" to the atmosphere of "entitlement among students, demanding from the residence committee to serve them, but unwilling to help with anything". One of the most difficult experiences for her was to see "how cruelly the house" treated candidates during the elections of their leaders.

As she spent more time at her new residence, while keeping her close friendships with her former residence, Aletta increasingly felt distanced from her established circle of white friends – her experience as one of the first white students in her residence was not shared by many others.

Nevertheless, she was not alone, as she now encountered other white students who had also moved to black residences in support of racial integration and became part of a group of white and black friends who were together leading for change, building bridges across the racial divides of campus. Here she met the other student leaders who were perceived as "troublemakers" on campus, but in fact with the "progressive leaders" changing campus.

At the end of her year, Aletta had to move out of campus accommodation, which limits the number of years a student can stay on campus. Now she would form part of an off-campus residence, a commuter student association. At that time, the Dean of Students proposed that more off-campus residences were needed, since the current number could not cater for all commuter students who made up 85%[131] of the total student body.

New residences also would also assist in building new campus cultures. Student leaders supported the proposal and decided to pilot two new off-campus residences that would serve as "an alternative to the established residences". Aletta jumped at the opportunity to be part of designing something new, leading the team to set up the new woman's residence and using her experience as leader in white and black residences to do so. They wanted to construct a "fantastic, but alternative culture" carefully that would "enrich the girls", rather than only repeat the established cultures of other residences. Still, they opted to "not leave all the current events behind", but rather select what was useful from the current systems and cultures and add new programmes to reflect the diversity of their members. Here they would build a new community that developed leaders for a changing campus, "at ease to choose an alternative route", students that could lead for change.

Aletta now had completed her leadership for change in residences. She had progressed from the sheltered and familiar residence of her first year that was a continuation of her privileged, white and Afrikaans home community, to leading for racial integration in her white and black residence communities and then creating with other student a new community as part of a new campus.

[131] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2011/11/17/VB/2/psnuwekosh.html, retrieved 09/28/2015.

A new politics

Aletta's leadership in residences prepared her to play a broader role in change on campus. New leaders and cultures were also needed in student politics. As she completed her term of office as Prime in 2010 and planned to move to her new residence, the campus community faced a crisis in its student politics, one that would place Aletta at the heart of designing new ways for togetherness for diverse students, and continue her journey to disrupt racial knowledge.

In the run-up to the SRC elections, SASCO embarked on protest action at one of the biggest student life events of the annual calendar, the traditional Intervarsity, a weekend programme of sports, cultural and social events with students from the university's closest rival campus at the North-West University (NWU).

Having been hosted annually for more than 70 years, SASCO considered the event part of the traditional institutional culture of the past, and its continuation in partnership with the NWU as institutional support of what it considered the racist policies at that university. As a result, SASCO decided to disrupt the event, running onto and occupying the netball courts as the woman's teams of the two universities were playing.[132]

This lead to wide-ranging media attention, specifically in the Afrikaans press, claiming "race conflict at a boiling point on campus,"[133] casting doubt on the project for reconciliation and change on campus introduced since Reitz.

Gaining a court interdict to prevent further disruptions, the university instituted disciplinary action and suspended the functioning of the SRC, declaring that the racial agendas of political parties were detrimental to its ongoing project for reconciliation and change.

The Dean of Students was tasked to convene interim student structures and oversee a review of student governance at the campus, establishing a broad student transformation forum (BSTF) and mediating the election of an interim student representative committee (ISC) from among student structures represented at the forum.[134]

[132] See http://mg.co.za/article/2010-08-13-kovsies-vs-pukke-ufs-sasco, retrieved 09/29/2015.
[133] See http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/rapport/2010/08/09/RH/1/hskovsies.html, retrieved 09/29/2015.
[134] See http://news.iafrica.com/sa/652960.html, retrieved 09/29/2015.

Considered a "small revolution" on campus, the intervention disrupted the hold of political parties on student representation; suddenly space existed for student leaders discouraged by the racial codes of student politics to play a role on campus.[135] Nominated by residences, students elected Aletta as deputy chairperson of the ISC and chairperson of the constitutional drafting committee of the BSTF at the centre of a new politics on campus.

Piecing voices together

The purpose of the BSTF was to "give all students, not only political parties" a voice in how they wanted to student governance to function, and included student associations from faculties, all sectors of student life and residences.[136] Facilitated externally, the forum debated structures and methods of representation that would best ensure that the "highest number of students will be represented". The forum wanted to "go back to the essence of an SRC", asking, "what should they do," and "how do you elect the best candidates?"

The forum instructed its drafting committee to embark on a study tour of other campuses and report their findings of what models of student governance seem to work best. Visiting campuses in the Eastern Cape Province, Aletta was especially struck by the balance at Rhodes University between political parties and general student life, noticing, "politics is there, with students debating politics at will, but it does not take over and dominate all else, it had a healthy place [in student life]". It also impressed her that "individual students openly declared their agendas and contested for office", in contrast to politics at her campus where you "only saw posters of the party, not the people or the individual." From all the reports, Aletta and her drafting committee would "piece together a solution".

Working with the university legal team, they worked for months to reflect the BSTF decisions in a new SRC constitution, which was adopted by the university the following year. Providing for sub-councils that represented various student constituencies, political parties now could participate in the elections with other campus associations through an associations' council, while individual candidates would contest various seats on the SRC, including the Presidency.[137]

[135] See the blog entry of one of the ISC-members, Rudolf de Beer, that offers a historical account of racial politics on campus and the process of change achieved in the BSTF and the ISC, retrieved 09/29/2015.
[136] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=1824, retrieved 09/29/2015.
[137] See http://www.ufs.ac.za/templates/news-archive-item?news=2084, retrieved 09/29/2015.

Hailed a success by students and the university in the years that followed, political parties launched legal challenges in the high courts against the new dispensation, but without success.[138]

An extraordinary experience, the BSTF emotionally remained a somewhat distanced project for Aletta, while her life as member of the ISC had a significant and very personal impact on her journey with racism and change.

Moral high ground

Elected following the suspension of student governance structures at the campus, the ISC were quickly vilified by political parties as "illegitimate" representatives and "pawns of management". So tough and traumatic was the experience for the team that it was "impossible to serve [on the ISC] for your own gain". This was not for the fainthearted and as a team, the ISC quickly had to figure out its role and agenda, deciding to "focus on what is right" and "model togetherness and unity to campus", while ensuring that student life and structures keep on functioning. This "moral high ground" would sustain them in the struggle to break free from racial politics.

Following the lead of the chairperson, Joan, also a former Prime, but of a black residence that was a success story for racial integration, the team developed an "attitude of trust and authentic friendship", united in their "shared purpose to serve students". They focused on "the people we were" and if you "felt uncomfortable among diverse races, you don't fit [in the team]".

Also for Aletta, this was "the first team I served in that was truly nor racist," challenging her "comfort zones" and own racial stereotypes. This was especially true of the role Joan played as chairperson, disrupting Aletta's stereotypes of blackness. Assuming she was from a suburban background, Aletta was surprised to find that Joan was from the Kasi (the township). For what Aletta knew about Kasi life, Joan would have all the reasons for not leading for reconciliation, but she did.

However, Aletta could also see that Joan's bold leadership came at a steep cost.

[138] See http://mg.co.za/article/2011-09-02-bid-to-nullify-ufs-student and http://www.thenewage.co.za/27390-1018-53-Student_polls_go_ahead, retrieved 09/29/2015.

Joan, as much as all the black students in the ISC faced the worst revenge and ridicule from their racial in-group on campus during their term of office, often called "sell-outs or coconuts" by black students and political leaders. In contrast, the white students did not face overt rejection from their racial peers or political groups on campus. Lead by Joan, the black students doggedly "refused any labels", openly and publicly challenging the continued racial politics of their detractors.

Finding strength in the togetherness and friendship in the team, Aletta and Joan gained confidence to "laugh at the absurdity of race", surviving the torment of leading for change by using humour.

One such joke was a comment on the absence of white students at the student centre's food court, *The Bridge*, joking that there must be "a white underground" somewhere.

8.8 Finding new meaning (2012)

The ISC succeeded in establishing for Aletta a sense of community and belonging beyond race, with a shared purpose to build racial togetherness and lead for change on a divided campus. They became a community of leaders known for building bridges for a new campus.

Making new sense

Aletta now had shifted from "pride in her residence" to "fierce pride as a Kovsie". This was a significant new perspective, because for Aletta the campus had become a community that "do something [about race]", with an identity that "does not belong to one group", but builds pride among all students. Now, she was celebrating not "white culture or black culture", but a unified Kovsies; a community of "heart that feels something and gets hurt when racist things happen – you have an emotional reaction when something happens; you can't stay apathetic any longer".

While Aletta thought, "We don't as yet have enough such people," she now was aware of a "value-driven" approach among student leaders. Specifically her relationship with black student leaders who refused to support racial codes and labels, but increasingly also other white student leaders who were building bridges between black and white, confirmed for Aletta that being a Kovsie was about "not conforming, but to think for yourself".

Building bridges

Reflecting on the community of student leaders she discovered among the bridgebuilders on campus, Aletta now understood a bridge-builder to be someone "who sees the similarities between yourself and the other person, no matter your race; they know we are the same, and do not focus attention on the differences". Thinking of the black student leaders she became friends with and worked with on campus, Aletta considered those who "were friends with white and black, not as a forced things, but natural, intuitively choosing to be friends with all", as true bridgebuilders. The bridgebuilders focused on and were good at building friendships across the racial divide, without compromising their identity, "each staying true to who she is culturally".

This was different for Aletta, who struggled with her sense of self as white and Afrikaans.

The more she discovered about white racism and became aware of the institutional racism of her community, the more Aletta struggled with her own cultural identity. Often feeling "guilty", she wondered, "What am I allowed to do as a white, Afrikaans person, and what not?" Unsure about "what is expected of her as a white Afrikaner", she did not think it a good thing to be "pro-Afrikaans".

However, during her term as member of the ISC, she met a vibrant, white and Afrikaans woman working in the media that showed Aletta a version of being Afrikaans she could accept. Appointed by the Dean of Students to oversee a reorganising of student media on campus, Christine was a part of a new generation of Afrikaans media professionals and artists that broke away from the established ways of doing things.[139] In her, Aletta found a role model of leadership working for the vision of integration and democracy, while staying true to being and creating in Afrikaans – "not supporting Afriforum, but proud of Afrikaans". In Christine, Aletta saw someone who could courageously stand up for what is right and remain true to oneself.

Reflecting on her journey with race, Aletta realised, "Yes, I am a bridge-builder", someone taking initiative and reaching out to others. A choice of vision and courage, she now knew came at a cost.

[139] Best represented in artists such as Karen Zoid, amongst others.

For the most part enjoying support and the trusted to lead for change, “you also lose many people along the way; friends who now are ashamed of you [for building bridges with black people] and stop to associate with you”. Often standing alone, feeling “you have to drive this by yourself, you are faced with burnout and fatigue”, because “there are too few workers” and reconciliation “is a long-term project”. Concerned for the project of reconciliation and change as a whole, Aletta considered this the biggest challenge for continued change on campus, “If you lose people to burnout, hurt by the sacrifices for change, they will become apathetic and not support the project anymore.” Surviving her own fatigue in her church community, Aletta believed the university now had to focus on “enabling students to be the next generations of leaders for change” on campus.

Standing at the start of a next phase in her life, a professional career, Aletta now asked herself, “I’ve gained so much knowledge [as a bridge-builder], what must I do now [to lead for change]?” The naïve student had become a conscious leader, wondering where next to lead for change.

CHAPTER 9
LERATO'S STORY, A STRUGGLE WITH BELONGING (2004-2012)

"Some people really believe that I'm white; that Lerato is not a black girl. People, who say this, are the people who don't really know me … it's like she's forgotten where she comes from … but for me, I live this life, because I love [diversity], I enjoy it."

Lerato identifies as female, Christian, black and Sesotho from a middle class background and growing up in township and suburban areas in the rural parts of the Free State Province. Born in 1991, her parents divorced when she was at a young age. During her early years, Lerato lived with her grandmother in the township. Later attending pre-primary and primary school, and living with her mother in town, she still regularly visited her grandmother in the township, "happily playing indigenous games".

Absent father, present mothers

The divorce of her parents was traumatic for Lerato, particularly the absence of her father. Struggling with feelings of rejection, Lerato held deep-seated anger towards her father from a young age, even more so when told by her mother that she "takes after him, being bossy". While an "obedient child", Lerato remembers her early life also for her "anger and bitterness".

However, what she lost in her absent father, she gained in her mother who "was a major influence" in her life, teaching her, "anger and bitterness will kill you". With her grandmother and great-grandmother still alive as she was growing up, Lerato benefited from a present and lived lineage of several generations of strong women in her family. They all shared a "love of fashion", with Lerato competing in beauty pageants from early on as her mother and grandmother had also done – her mother had earlier worked at a clothing factory. Lerato later was part of the "Cosmo click" at high school, the group of girls at high school known for "being fashion snobs".

While not remembering experiences, or stories told of racism while growing up, as "a child we thought whites were beautiful, having money, more focused [on achieving] and less divorce in their families", perceptions that Lerato found contested only when arriving on campus.

Black in the suburbs

During her primary school years, Lerato's mother had changed careers, joined the South African Police Service and decided to move to the suburban areas in town. Getting to good schools was part of the motivation for moving from the township and Lerato attended an interracial and English-medium primary school.

Most learners at the school were white, so that Lerato met and befriended white learners there, though not as intimate friends. This was so because the town and the rural region where she grew up consisted of mining and farming communities with strict hierarchies of race and class and distances between black and white and rich and poor. "Sotho stayed with Sotho, Afrikaans with Afrikaans and status with status."

Although friends on the playground and in school activities or on the sports field, black and white as a rule did not socialise after school or over weekends. Still, Lerato became known as "a coconut" among her black peers due to her own style of talking, liking fashion and having white friends. Nevertheless, this was not a positive connotation and already in her young life, Lerato learned that "coconuts were losers, not popular and not black".

Lerato's mother and family did not discuss incidents of racism or their experiences during apartheid with her, wanting Lerato "to get on with her life and make use of the opportunities she now has".

For Lerato, her "mother didn't really have stories to share with me regarding apartheid", but "for both my grandmother and my great-grandmother I always sensed sadness/hurt when they had to share their apartheid experiences, but they also had beautiful, happy stories to share as well". Upset when her great-grandmother had made such comments, Lerato also felt she "could not disagree" and would rather "let it go to show respect".

Choosing to avoid the traumatic memories of apartheid, and teaching her "to focus on the good things", Lerato learned from her family not to focus on racism, but rather on opportunities to achieve success.

Adopting a wilful blindness to racism, Lerato remained "unaware of racial incidents".

9.1 High school (2004-2008)

The high school Lerato had attended was mostly white and traditionally Afrikaans, while also in the process of desegregating its student profile, in her estimate with 20% and 80% black learners during her school career. Lerato, as was the case for most black learners, was placed in the one English-medium class established for each year group at the school.

This meant that black and white learners did not interact as a rule at school, but could keep separate from one another, so that the school remained "very segregated". All her teachers were white, with the only sense of difference among them her "lesbian netball coach who loved all of us".

School events often were exclusive, leaving Lerato to feel "restricted and unable to afford certain things". In this institutional culture, "We would all smile with each other, but you knew that somehow that you had your barriers."

Hearing already at primary school "stories about the high school principal that punishes black learners more harshly than white learners", Lerato was grateful for "caring teachers" and experiencing no racism at school.

However, the gossip about the white, male and Afrikaans principal were proven correct when all the black learners attending the school once were "called together for a meeting, addressed by the principal, telling us how we should dress and do our hair".

Differently to what she was used to at primary school, here Lerato "had very little contact with learners from Afrikaans classes", interacting with white learners "only on the netball court" and discovering that "racial groups that click together are the norm". Falling quickly "into the pattern" Lerato made mostly black friends, even though part of the "snobbish group" who were friends because of "being Sotho and liking fashion" – she was not part of the "normal black girls attending 'bashes' ".

Continuing her friendship with white learners she met at primary school, Lerato was popular among white learners and teachers, to such an extent that her friends considered her a "*witbroodjie*" (sweetheart) of the teachers.

Enjoying close relationships with her teachers in class and her coaches in sport, popular among learners generally, Lerato did well at school, achieving well academically, being selected for the top netball teams and serving as group leader of the school chapter of the CSV (*Christen Studentevereniging*).[140]

Well-loved and successfully negotiating the racial codes and distances of her school and community, Lerato in the white, Afrikaans environment of the school gained the acceptance she longed for in the absence of her father.

Nevertheless, in her success she also continued the legacy of strong women in her family, even regarding issues of race, and she became friends with their white neighbour's daughters, "Having them over at our house, and visiting theirs, which my mother supported and considered very progressive."

So strong was her sense of achievement and belonging at school that Lerato could not make sense of the racial traumas she faced in her senior years at high school.

Loved, but not selected

Doing well among her peers as leader and as netball player, Lerato "worked hard to be selected for the first netball team" and hoped to be elected as a member of the Learner Representative Council (LRC) in her final year at school. However, to her complete surprise and intense disappointment, her name did not appear in the final team selection and she was not elected to the LRC.

These disappointments were all the more painful since "only two black learners" were elected to the learner council and the player selected in her position in the first netball team "was not as good a player" as Lerato. These rejections were at odds with her experience of acceptance at school and among her peers, black and white.

Confused at her unexpected exclusion, Lerato tried to find reasons to make sense and understand "how the other learners [who were selected] are better than me", finding no other reasons, but that "their parents were always involved, mothers or fathers attending functions or sponsoring the netball team".

[140] Established in 1896, since 1965, the association established separate, but similar organisations for black students aligned with the racially separate white and black churches of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. See http://www.vcsv.co.za/index.php/about-us/our-story, retrieved 10/09/2015.

Lerato discovered then that her school rewarded involved parents who could contribute financially more than others with places for their children in teams and on councils. Since her mother was unable to contribute extra and her father absent, Lerato took this rejection as a message that "Maybe those people are better than me, since their mother or father can contribute something my mother can't." Deeply hurt and confused, Lerato refused "to take it as a racial thing" and decided, "not to fight it, because it's impossible [to change it]," and "because of home, how my mother raised me not to have a thing about race". For this reason, even though "as black learners we sometimes talked about racism, we brushed it aside, not doing the *Amandla* thing or burning the school down".

She had learned to "turn a blind eye to racism and make compromises for the benefit she gained in opportunities"; yet, she discovered a ceiling to how far she could go. So severe was her sense of rejection and betrayal that Lerato wanted "never again to live the lifestyle of her school", which she was sure would happen at the University of the Free State. Reading the news and hearing stories about the Reitz incident during her final year, she recognised the same segregation and institutional culture she lived with at school, "but simply on a bigger scale". However, she had few choices left, as the universities elsewhere in the country she applied at were either full or could not place her in the programme she wanted to study.

Joining a university that was "her very last option", Lerato arrived on campus for "a very miserable year; I hated this place with all my heart".

9.2 Arriving on a transforming university campus (2009)

Arriving at her residence, Lerato discovered that she was one of only a few black first-year students placed in the residence as part of the new placement policy for racial integration in the residences. Placed in a very traditional, white and Afrikaans residence, she sensed "a barrier between her and white students, even though they were welcoming".

Placed together as roommates, the black students "clicked together", but they were still expected to participate in the normal first-year initiation that was part of the traditional white and Afrikaans residence culture. The worst parts of residence initiation were the attitude of the senior students, "calling us *jarre*" (a made-up local name for first-years), while expecting first-years to call them "eminencies" and do whatever the seniors instructed.

Faced with curfews, late night activities, learning songs and traditions of the residence and required to follow the rules of seniority in the residence strictly, such as prohibited areas that only seniors were allowed to use, Lerato felt at the mercy of the senior students with "little protection from the residence committee".

Soon, Lerato also experienced "the first racial incident of my life". Attending an *inter* with a white men's residence as part of the orientation programme of her residence, Lerato was surprised to find no black men among the first-years, while none of the white men talked to her or any other black student, "talking to whites only".

The incident seemed to be the rule, rather than an exception as Lerato discovered racial distance also elsewhere on campus – attending once an Afrikaans class, she felt "out of place" as the only black student there. Her worst fears were coming true – she relived the trauma of high school.

Feeling alone and "without a friend", during those first weeks Lerato "went home every weekend, crying heavily" when she had to return to campus. Upset at the racism of senior white students in her residence, and among students on campus, Lerato soon called her mother, pleading with her to cancel her studies and let her return home. However, her mother disagreed, instead instructing her "to block it all out" and realise "they don't pay your school fees".

Crying together

It was a different story among the first-years. Noticing "real interest in our relationship", Lerato met and befriended white students who shared similar struggles as first-year students. Once, when feeling discouraged, Lerato visited Martie, a white first-year student, in her room, "having coffee and talking about our first-year experience". Overcome with emotion while sharing with each other their own traumas of initiation, "they cried together", with Lerato realising that her white peers faced similar traumas and equally "didn't like the rules [of initiation]".

Now living together, sharing facilities and interacting with white students on a very personal level, for the first time, Lerato became intimately aware of white lives and found her perceptions challenged.

In contrast to her childhood racial stereotypes of "beautiful whites", she observed white students who were not rich, not focused and not racially distanced. Simultaneously she also observed a growing tension among black and white students in their group, particularly in response to a "very bossy white girl who no one wanted to stand up to". However, one of her fellow black students, Mary, eventually "stood up to her and confronted her about her attitude among the first-years, which was a huge thing for us". Observing this conflict between the two students – the one black and the other white – Lerato decided, "This was not about race, but an issue of two strong personalities."

With no other option, but to find ways of surviving amidst the traumas of initiation and the demands of senior students, Lerato slowly awakened to new relationships among her peers and decided to "change my attitude" and "make use of the opportunities offered" in her residence.

Still hurting from the rejection she experienced the year before when not elected to the RCL or selected for the netball first team at high school, Lerato struggled with deep resentment and bitterness with the white and Afrikaans institutional culture she now saw repeated also in her residence and on campus – she struggled with a sense of not belonging here as a black student.

9.3 A turn: dramatic belonging (2009)

However, within a matter of weeks Lerato found acceptance in her white residence and a surprising healing of the pain she endured at her white school the previous year. Recognised for her skill as a netball player, Lerato soon was selected for the first netball team of her residence, and as player for the senior university team, what was denied her at school, she gained in her residence and on campus.

By the end of the first term the initiation of first-years ended with the *ontheffing* (end of induction), where the first-years now were accepted as full members of the residence and could enjoy most of the privileges previously denied them as *jarre*. Now Lerato "could begin to love the place" and no longer felt "bound by rules".

Growing in confidence she became more involved and volunteered at the community service projects of her residence and soon was elected as the KOVSGEM[141] project leader of her residence. When the time came for the residence to nominate potential leaders for the annual and prestigious student leadership-development programme, PO10SEE, Lerato found she was nominated to represent her residence. Different to a year before when unexpectedly she was not elected to the learner council at high school, even though a recognised and well-loved leader, she now gained recognition for her leadership potential on campus and in her residence.

Within a matter of months, she had arrived at a dramatic turn in her reading of race, a turn from rejection and distance similar to high school, to acceptance and belonging among black and white in her residence.

Arriving with her worst fears of the place with what she knew of the Reitz incident, placed in a white, Afrikaans residence with all the familiar codes and hierarchies she lived with at high school, within a few months Lerato has both relived racial trauma and found acceptance and recognition among her peers. Without realising it, the residence had righted the wrong against her and returned to her a sense of confidence in her ability to negotiate the environment and achieve success. By following the familiar rules of her residence, and returning to her strategy "to not make this racial", she could build a future.

Following the rules

However, her success caused conflict with the other black students in her residence, in particular with Mary, the "strong personality" who earlier confronted "the bossy white first-year". Over time, Mary became "difficult, refusing to comply with the traditional rules of seniority in the residence". Citing the code of conduct of the university, Mary argued it did not make provision for the rules that allowed privileges to senior students over first-year students, such as preserving certain areas for use only by senior students, which was contravening their rights as first-year students of the university. She demanded that Lerato joined her in protesting the residence culture and expected Lerato to defend her when she refused to play along with initiation; something Lerato was hesitant to do, opting not to disagree with her openly and rather keeping quite.

[141] The official student organisation for community service, *Kovsie Gemeenskapsdiens* (Kovsie Community Service), which later merged with the Rag Office as part of the post-Reitz transformation interventions.

However, their underlying different approaches and responses to the traditions and culture of the residence could not remain hidden. Feeling frustrated with the traditions of the residence continuing as before following her complaints, Mary decided to protest the rules by "occupying the area set aside for senior students to drink tea, the senior *teekan*[142] (tea urn)". When it was time for tea to be served, Mary joined the senior's *teekan*, sitting down on the teacart next to the can and refusing to move. Disciplinary steps by the residence committee followed, with Mary approaching the acting Dean of Students, a black woman, for support in resolving the issue. Following the incident, Mary felt aggrieved with Lerato, confronting her for "not backing her up, but rather siding with them". Responding angrily to Mary's accusation, Lerato argued, "You know and should have followed the rules." Lerato did not want to be part of the angry distance between Mary and the senior white students of her residence, "who absolutely hated each other". She "hated the whole black-white thing". However, since the incident they were bound together as leaders in perpetual conflict.

9.4 Stepping into leadership (2009-2010)

Increasingly finding a place and a sense of belonging in her residence community, Lerato now was recognised as a potential leader in the residence – a black leader who values its culture and supports racial togetherness, rather than "being difficult" and causing racial tension. On the face of it, her acceptance in the residence and success as leader among her peers seemed to result from her decision to "change her attitude and ignore racial issues", seemingly proving Mary's claim that Lerato was "siding with them [the white and Afrikaans residence culture]".

However, this was not the full story. By actively joining residence life, Lerato encountered events that disrupted the strict racial hierarchy of residence and campus cultures – an important development in a campus community still marked by racial distance. In only the first year of major interventions for racial integration, the students still faced racial segregation in multiple ways, most prominently in class. Due to the language policy of the university that allowed for separate classes that use English or Afrikaans as medium of instruction for the same academic programme, black and white students attended separate classes.

[142] *Teekan* (tee urn) is a long-standing daily or weekly gathering of students in a residence for morning or afternoon tea and social interaction. In traditional residence cultures also used to separate senior and junior students, it became an important post-Reitz tool for racial integration in residences, facilitating black and white interaction.

This Lerato experienced soon when she, due to feeling comfortable in Afrikaans since high school, first attended an Afrikaans lecture of a particular programme. To her surprise she was "the only black student in the class" and "felt out of place" – she never attended an Afrikaans class again.

However, unbeknownst to Lerato at the time, during her first year (2009), campus residences entered a next phase of the post-Reitz interventions. The first phase of the interventions focused on interracial dialogue initiatives to resolve conflict, debrief the student community and determine the limitations to racial integration in the residences.[143] Now in its second phase, the intervention programme focused on designing and testing solutions to overcome these limitations in partnership with residences.

In order to do so, the consulting team worked with the residence head and committee of each residence to design and test projects to support racial integration in their own residence, while coordinating and reporting on the varied and diverse initiatives of all residences in one broad process.

In these post-Reitz interventions, "real situations taking place in residences were used to introduce pilot studies to assess possible solutions", which "allowed for a continuous consultation and dialoguing process with stakeholder groups to assess the underlying dynamics and factors relevant to the change process".[144] The most impactful initiatives were included in the official recommendations for campus-wide change interventions and rolled out in all the residences in subsequent phases of transformation.

Appreciative inquiry

One such initiative was a workshop with all students in the residence to "rethink residence culture" using the methodology of Appreciative Inquiry. Used also as theoretical underpinning for the post-Reitz intervention programme as a whole, the theory focuses on patterns of success, on what works, rather on patterns of failure – implying that in due course, patterns of failure fall by the wayside.[145]

[143] iGubu Agency (2010) *Phase B report: UFS Project to increase diversity in residences*. Stellenbosch: iGubu Agency.
[144] iGubu Agency, 2010, p 6.
[145] iGubu Agency, 2010, p 10.

Introduced by her residence head, and something that would receive recognition for the project at a national student housing conference in the following year,[146] all students were invited to join the workshop to ascertain "what in residence culture they appreciated, and design changes". The workshop helped students "deal with issues concerning race and the ultimate thing we also tried to get at, is what is it that me as an 'Emily' lady would love to see change or would love to see grow as Emily Hobhouse? What is like my ultimate dream for Emily Hobhouse".

Attending the workshop, Lerato felt she "learnt a lot about what students wanted, even while others got offended". Lerato had the sense that with all other students in her residence, black and white, they were "dealing with stereotypes and building shared values and a vision for the residence". While still a tough engagement especially for senior students, Lerato sensed the possibility of real change and could associate with a new vision where everyone feels welcome, black and white.

Taken as a successful pilot, the workshop was incorporated to the overall change intervention in all residences that Lerato would participate in, in her residence. Now a standing part of the annual residence life programme, all students of a particular residence together workshopped the underlying racial stereotypes reflected in the residence culture, and redesigned the values, structures and traditions of their community – the Residences Cultural Renewal Programme.[147] However, just as Lerato was discovering some intent for change among her peers, and encountering senior students willing to lead for change, the campus community entered the annual and racially divisive SRC elections.

Disappointing politics

As was the case every year, the SRC elections in Lerato's first year also divided students along racial lines. Feeling "overwhelmed when I first saw it", Lerato was surprised at the racial loyalties black and white students adopted during the elections – "it seems like people just start bringing out their true colours that they had never shown". Hating the return to "the black and white thing", Lerato noted that "once the elections come up, then everyone [black students] is like, I'm SASCO, I'm SASCO" and white students declare, "*Ek is 'n trotse Afrikaner, ek is 'n trotse boer* (I'm a proud Afrikaner)".

[146] See http://152.111.11.6/argief/berigte/volksblad/2010/11/02/VB/2/kampuselsie.html, retrieved on 10/11/15.
[147] The programme consists of mediated open forum discussions to evaluate residence culture, symbols, hierarchies, values and traditions, which takes place at least twice a year in every campus and day residence.

However, familiar with racial codes in leadership structures, Lerato was shocked more at what she considered the dishonesty of her peers who during the elections "will do whatever it takes to get that seat" and who were prepared "to do whatever it takes to g*et all* the first-years to campaign for them".

She became so distraught at racial politics during elections that she often felt, "scared of what will happen if I'm approached [by political parties as representative]", since she was "not political; not a person who wants to separate people". Yet, the elections of student leaders that year also introduced important markers of change on campus, with the first black SRC President elected and a black Prime (chairperson) for her residence who fully supported the process of racial integration and change. Soon Lerato found a mentor in her Prime when she was asked to serve on the residence committee in support of racial integration in her residence.

Integrated committee

As part of the post-Reitz interventions, the university required residence committees to appoint additional black or white members to the committees in order to support racial integration in the year to come.

A solution was co-designed by students with the iGubu Consultants during that year as part of the Residences Diversity Programme in which residences freely participated and recruited additional members either from within or among residences on campus. The Prime of her residence approached Lerato and asked her to join the residence committee.

Lerato agreed to participate, because she "supported the new direction and as part of her own new attitude" towards the residence. In the acceptance and belonging she experienced here, in contrast to what she lived through at school, Lerato found evidence of a different culture to the racist one illustrated during the campus elections earlier the year. However, her agreement to participate also pushed her into conflict with black and white groups, exposing the racial distance on campus.

"This racial thing between us black people"

The Prime's decision to approach Lerato to join the residence committee during her first year was met with disappointment by senior black students in the residence.

Not only was this against the culture of seniority in residences, which at the time did not allow junior students to serve on the executive committee of a residence, but it also upset the pattern of seniority of the black in-group in the residence.

It was also an issue that a junior student was elected over seniors to represent the black students of the residence in the committee. While "never confronted by the black senior students", Lerato had heard "from other people that they were very disappointed in the leadership of the house that they had chosen a first-year over them". Confronting the Prime about Lerato's appointment to the committee, a senior black student wanted to know "How could you do that? Why was I not considered? This girl just arrived and already she is on the HK. What does she know?"

What had caused further tension was the process used by the Prime to appoint the additional residence committee members. She approached several candidates to test their availability at a time when the details of the project for integrated committees were still unclear, and only thereafter made a final appointment, "We were first told that it's not set yet, but we are informing you that you are a potential." Mary, a fellow first-year student who had confronted the "bossy, white first-year student" earlier with the challenge, "Who gave you power," were also approached by the Prime in this way.

Clashing earlier also with Lerato and accusing her for "siding with them", Mary was disappointed that Lerato was selected for the committee over her. Lerato's appointment to the residence committee caused conflict with her black peers. It "created this racial thing between us as black people". This was different to the response of the white students, but for very particular reasons.

Eminencies

At the time of the rollout of the intervention programme for racially integrated committees in the residences, white students had already elected "their residence committee, which was white students". This meant that among white students those wanting to serve in leadership had already contested elections with the preferred candidates chosen, so that "the white girls didn't have anything against the black girls coming in, because they already had their chance".

White senior students “also had a problem with me being a first-year on HK”. However, the white students considered Lerato an exception to this rule, because she “respected them in her first year” and continued to afford them the respect owed to senior students in the traditional residence culture – “I still saw them as my eminencies, they were my seniors.”

Lerato won the white students over by complying with the rules of seniority of residence culture, continuing to uphold the codes of seniority even after elected as member of the residence committee. She also decided to be “very much people orientated, I'm really not going to bash you with my problems or take up my issues on you”. She did not confront fellow students, but rather built friendships among white seniors, so that when elected to the residence committee, they accepted her for her leadership.

Memories shared

Now part of the residence committee, Lerato became directly involved in the post-Reitz interventions focused on student leaders. This included training events using storytelling and leadership development programmes with diverse groups of students.

One such event included a “wall of memories” that invited participants to share their most difficult life experiences in small groups and thereafter post keywords for these on a wall with all other students participating in the programme. This allowed black and white students to meet one another as individuals, but also to witness the similarities of their experiences on the shared wall of memories, and so disrupt the racist stereotypes of blackness and whiteness among students on campus – leading Lerato to write on the wall that, “I wish we could do it again.” However, it was in the work of the facilitator of the session that Lerato found the greatest impact.

Facilitated by one of the lead facilitators of the consulting team working with residences in the change programme, Lerato was struck by how “liberal and focused” the facilitator was. A black woman as well, the facilitator offered Lerato her first black mentor who modelled who she aspired to become, someone “so open, and with so much insight to share with us”. This was significant, since Lerato encountered distance among senior black students in her residence, due to her conflict with Mary, also among her black peers, so that her role models for change leadership until then were the white seniors of her life – her residence head and her Prime.

In the year to come, she would meet another and more intimate black mentor in the chairperson of the student council. Still, in this lead facilitator Lerato found a first black mentor in her becoming "a diverse person".

9.5 Reitz and forgiveness (2010)

"I remember with the Reitz matter I was also still very ignorant, which is very bad." Following the media headlines reporting the Reitz incident during her final year at school, Lerato in her first year arrived on campus fearing the worst of racism. Focused only on adjusting to life in her residence and on campus, Lerato originally did not reflect on Reitz. However, her involvement in the post-Reitz interventions and stepping into residence leadership pushed her into debates on matter of race.

Nevertheless, it was the healing involvement in her church community and the healing gained personally there that would determine how she made sense of Reitz.

A healing community

In her second year as student on campus, Lerato joined the local Christian Revival Church (CRC), a congregation known for its interracial membership and for the progressive message of its head pastor who regularly preached against racism, calling for reconciliation.

> "Then he is like, I don't understand why people like to classify one another or become so racial about everything, because that's not how God sees us, we are all His children, as he's preaching on something, then he would really hammer on it and he is really, really passionate about that."

This was significant, since the pastor was white, male and Afrikaans, which stood in sharp contrast to Lerato's experience at the main Afrikaans student church located adjacent to campus, the *KovsieKerk*, attended mostly by white, Afrikaans students.

Historically, the congregation functioned as integral part of the residence life programme of the university, mostly supporting white residences. The pastors of *KovsieKerk* were closely involved with residence committees of white residences, often attending house meetings or meetings of the residence committees and actively engaging university management in support of student concerns and institutional processes of change.

Owing to its historical position in relation to campus life, the congregation also played a major part in general student life and coordinating and housing several students associations. It also actively contributing actively to student life programmes such as, amongst others, hosting campus arts and culture events and offering first-year welcoming programmes, most notably the *Kougom Kamp*, a youth camp for first-year students the week prior to the start of the welcoming programme of the university.

As an annual "ritual, they invite all the HK with the first-years at the beginning of the year" to attend a church service to welcome the first-years and residence committees to campus and wish them well for the year. Lerato felt "I had to go, because I can't be like, the rest of the HK, okay, you go there and I'm not going." However, the experience was not positive, with Lerato feeling, "It was very like conservative, very restricted, when at CRC I feel so free; I felt very caged if I could say that."

In contrast to her experience at KovsieKerk, at CRC Lerato found a community that could offer her support in leading in her residence. With prayer groups and student outreach programmes that included black and white students, the youth ministry of the congregation focused on building shared aspirations among students to "leave a legacy" and "take initiative for diversity". Here she also found intimate support in the mentorship of a youth pastor of her congregation, a young, white woman, who "was passionate about us [as students]". For Lerato, it was "through the church that I've grown to become the person I am, because I'm under such like amazing leadership, really, really strong leadership".

However, significantly, it was specifically the message of forgiveness that most affected Lerato's sense of belonging in this community. The pastor's message that "people should make peace, because you can't really still carry the anger each and every day of your life", really hit home for her, especially regarding her own anger at her father for divorcing her mother, and leaving her as a child. Lerato learned that "it [anger] really destroys you; it's like a heavy bag that you carry in your life unnecessarily and I mean; you also do still wrong people yourself".

Becoming someone "very big on forgiveness", Lerato learned that "it is not easy to forgive a person, but you can't really carry this bag around". In her faith community, Lerato found healing for her anger at the rejection of her father, but also a way to make sense of the Reitz trauma and process of reconciliation taking place on campus.

Reflecting on her own journey to forgive her father for divorcing and leaving them, Lerato understood the anger among black students at Reitz, but also the need for forgiveness – without forgiveness, "I still carry the anger and [my father] is fine living where ever he is."

Regarding the process for reconciliation among the Reitz students and workers introduced by the new Rector of the university, Lerato knew, "a lot of people are not going to see it in that way, because they still have to learn the lesson".

Drawing on her new faith community and her healing through forgiveness, as Lerato became a senior leader in her residence she adopted forgiveness as defining framework in leading, becoming "very big on forgiveness", even while aware that "a lot of people won't agree with me".

9.6 Leading for change (2010-2011)

Lerato stepped into leadership roles in her residence when the chairperson invited her to join the residence committee as part of the post-Reitz interventions for racially integrated residence committees. However, the year thereafter, at the end of her first term of office, Lerato shared the institutional vision for racial integration in residences and availed herself for election as Prime of her residence.

Finding healing in her faith community and belonging in her residence community Lerato now wanted to lead at the most senior levels among her peers and, as at school in her senior grades, allowed herself to hope for success.

However, precisely as a result of her exclusion from the learners council at school, when all indications were she would be appointed to the council, she now also doubted the actual chances of her succeeding in her campaign. Not only would she compete with senior, white students, but also with Mary, a fellow first-year student who accused her of "siding with them [white students]".

For Lerato, issues of race presented only doubts for her campaign. Was there any chance that her bid as Prime would succeed in a majority white residence and when competing with another black student who claimed to be more black than her?

Lerato vividly remembers the moments of her election as the first black Prime of a traditionally white, Afrikaans women's residence,

> "I remember the picture so clearly when we were standing there in the *gazellie* and they're announcing [the elected committee members], but I thought they had skipped my name and I already started crying and in tears; then they called my name. I stood there with all the HKs. And then they announced the Prime and they go [Lerato]. Oh my word, the whole hostel was a bang. Everyone went crazy."

A deeply moving moment in her life, the experience confirmed her knowledge and sense of self beyond the limits of racial hierarchies. Now she would "lead with students' trust", elected by black and white students and not recruited to a position as part of an institutional intervention programme for transformation.

This was true also for her committee, with intimate friendships growing among black and white to such an extent that Lerato and her Deputy Prime, Betty, a white and Afrikaans student, grew so close that they were jokingly referred to as the "black [Betty] and white [Lerato]". Reflecting on their relationship Lerato remembers, "We were just so similar; we loved people together; we are loud and crazy together. She is also very focused and I'm also like that; the only difference was our skin colour. We were practically the same."

Together, black and white could lead for change and offer the university what it was looking for; "strong student leaders with backbone for new things". Lerato had lain to rest the high school ghosts of racial trauma. Or so she thought.

First black Prime

At first not considering the import of her election as first black Prime (chairperson) of a former white residence on campus a little more than two years after Reitz, Lerato was caught off guard by the public response to the news. "It wasn't at that time when I got it, oh my goodness; I'm the first black Prime. I felt more like, oh my goodness; I can't believe these girls trusting me so much to make me their Prime." Until then, relatively unknown as leader outside her residence community, within days following her election as Prime, Lerato was major news with media reporting on her election; senior university leaders calling to congratulate her and political constituencies claiming the event as their victory.

Elected the year after Barack Obama's election as first black USA President and after the election of the first black SRC President of the university, SASCO now claimed Lerato's election as first black Prime at a white residence as further evidence of their victory against campus racial oppression. At the same time white students in general and white residences in particular claimed the free election of a black student as Prime (chairperson) to a white residence as evidence of their being "post-racial", demanding an end to interventions for change in residences.

Excited about the role she could play with her leadership team to "model unity and cross-racial relationships as the new normal to first-years", Lerato and her team joined the growing movement of change on campus. Around them, all campus and student life was also changing, with redesigned student life events that catered for diverse students, black residences starting to win top awards in established campus programmes and the PO10SEE camp catering equally to all students.

The broad sweep of a changing campus was most visible in the suspension of student governance structures and the introduction of an Interim Student Committee (ISC) and a Broad Student Transformation Forum (BSTF) to oversee transformation of student representation.

Lerato was now part of a generation of student leaders intentionally leading for change as co-authors of a new campus. Among her fellow Primes she found peers who also "wanted to take the university further, going forwards, not backwards", and in the senior students who led the redesign of student governance on campus through the ISC and BSTF, Lerato found mentors to lead for change. Yet, contrary to these signals of change, Lerato found the ghosts of racial distance returning.

Trouble stirred first in the intimate space of her residence community. While not immediately aware of it, Lerato later "heard that some of the white girls weren't really happy with the fact that they were now getting a black Prime and they planned to move out of the res". This was a hurtful development, but Lerato decided to focus rather on the positives and "never pondered on that, because I had like a lot of girls who were sort of like on my side; I didn't ponder on that".

The racial distance among black and white in her residence continued, leaving Lerato feeling disappointed with students' lack of initiative. Black students found "excuses not to participate", while white students resisted her initiatives to build a diverse residence life programme. "The black girls refused to attend *Pret-op-die-Plaas* (Fun-on-the-Farm), because they don't want to *sokkie*, while the white girls withdrew when I introduced *kwaito* at residence events".

However, while feeling hurt with black and white resistance to change, Lerato found black antagonism the most painful.

My own backbone

The most painful experience for Lerato were the public attempts by students from a black male residence to humiliate her, most often in public when she was "walking with my first-years". Confused at their anger, she "did not understand why they would give me hell, call us names as snobs or say that we're white or we don't know who we are or we're trying to be something we're not", since "I'm also black; I'm just as black as they are". Black doubt about her integrity also continued in her residence committee. Mary, who had also contested the elections for Prime, but was elected only as member of the residence committee, challenged Lerato's authority as chairperson at regular intervals and in public, most notably at house meetings. Finding these incidents deeply traumatic, Lerato worked hard to maintain her composure "for the sake of the first-years" and to "honour the trust of the majority in her residence, who elected her" – only when alone in the bathroom would she "break down and cry".

For Lerato, her experience of black antagonism resulted from the stubborn political view among black students on campus that, "These white people always try to rule over you; they get into your head to control you. They are trying to mislead you." However, this view contrasted with Lerato's experience of life on campus, leading her to counter such arguments among her friends and black peers, saying, "But dude, I do have my own backbone. And I don't think like you. Not everyone is always out to get you."

Lerato found herself in-between, equally comfortable among black and white, able to lead for change on campus, but facing rejection for this sense of self and campus – an experience she was well familiar since primary school; her life as a "coconut".

9.7 A turn: coconut head girl (2011)

"People who did not know me, called me a coconut, [saying] I'm a white girl trapped in a black girl's body." Lerato was living a life and "doing things that black people don't do" so that in her residence, "They said if I had blonde hair I would be part of all the Primes with blonde hair before and after me." Different to what black girls do, "I'm not going to not play squash or *pilates*, or not go to PO10SEE because we'll climb a mountain there, or not going to be able to swim or going to not like Zimbabweans or Americans, because this is how black girls are."

Irrespective of what her black peers were claiming, Lerato refused their definition of her as "a white girl", but rather as someone "not afraid to adjust and try new things – a diverse person instead of black or white". Confident in her ability to enjoy life among black and white, Lerato became "an extravagant black girl, admired by black guys" and asked by "many how to do so too".

However, Lerato was not alone. She found a mentor in the chairperson of the ISC, Joan, a black woman who faced similar black and political antagonism for her role in leading change on campus. Also labelled a coconut among black students, Joan would often meet with Lerato, helping her "to survive being the first black Prime" and mentoring her to lead with "boldness". Lerato became so confident in being a "diverse person" that she invited a white male student as partner to the annual house dance of her residence, becoming the "first black girl to do so".

Soon, Joan and Lerato would tease each other as the coconut queen and coconut head girl of campus. Surviving the challenges they faced with humour, their relationship in fact offered Lerato a sense of the "new normal" of leadership on campus – leaders that "build a legacy not determined by the colour of my skin".

9.8 Finding new meaning (2012)

Lerato now was confident that a post-racial world was real, as was confirmed in her success as leader in her residence, the intimate friendships with black and white student leaders that made up a new campus community and the wide-ranging interventions for and successes of change on campus. She had come to reject views that the campus community were racist, feeling, "I don't understand when people call this a white university."

It seemed that the strategy she learned from her mom growing up, to avoid the negative and "not ponder on racism" helped her to achieve success on campus and avoid the racial hierarchy still so prevalent in society. Nevertheless, in the voice of her stepfather, Lerato found a memory of history to counter avoidance and seek new meaning of her sense making of race. Often "randomly starting conversation about apartheid and how privileged we are right now", her stepfather would share stories about the apartheid past with Lerato, when "black people could not own farms and were passed over for promotions in the police service".

He would criticise young people who "have forgotten everything that has happened in the past, and we're just living freely, and not really taking into consideration what had happened previously for us to actually be living in this era". Confronted with the memory of apartheid, Lerato felt, "Yes, I do understand, like I do know what happened in the past, but it never really affected me and I don't want to be carrying any hate or anger that I don't know anything about. We are living to create our own history now, [rather than] make that a big thing that I always surround my life with. Because then I'm not living my life, I'm living a life that I have just carried over from somebody else."

These conversations were not a pleasant experience for her. Lerato "would rather keep my mouth shut and avoid my stepdad" in due course.

Making new sense

Lerato had moved from the avoidance as strategy to survive in the racial hierarchies and racism of her community and school to 'forgiveness and healing'; from anger as strategy for moving beyond the limitations of racism and racial distance at campus and elsewhere – a move away from "my angry childhood", "turning a blind eye" at school and "not pondering it" at campus.

Lerato had discovered a new sense of agency to lead with and for change, now believed,

> "Be the change you want to see – don't let your circumstances define you. Make your own history and live your own life. Don't pay the price for what happened in the past. Those who lived then already paid it. Don't live a life of bitterness, of which you don't even know where it comes from."

For Lerato the struggle for forgiveness and healing for the experience of rejection by her father prepared the way for her journey to counter racial anger and hatred with forgiveness and healing. Aware that "forgiving is not always a very easy thing to do", Lerato now took as foundation for leading that, "for me forgiveness is such a journey".

She matured and gained confidence in her sense of self and preference for 'diversity' in identity and knowledge, asking, "How do you [only] live with friends who think like you, who look like you, who dresses, speak like you, [when] I mean people are so diverse and diversity is so beautiful. You always want to learn about other people. You just want to hear what the other person has to offer you."

She had grown to value her in-betweenness not as a strategy for survival within the racial hierarchies round her, but as the foundation of her new aspirations for "leadership, legacy and to make my own history". Lerato now considers herself someone "with a black skin, not black, but a diverse person".

Building bridges

Her life growing up as a "coconut", for Lerato prepared her for her life as "bridge-builder" on campus, and as foundation for her aspiration to "be diverse". Growing up in a community that was still "apartheid country – the old white and black people are still teaching their children that the black people are the black people, the white people are the white people", Lerato appreciated "being exposed to such an [racist] environment [at school, because] it prepared me to know you are going to get people who are willing to change, but they find it a bit difficult because of where they come from". Her life lived as coconut in a community marked with racial hierarchy and distance compelled a life in-between and capabilities to move among and beyond black and white identities.

Her life in-between was deterred by black and white, but most painfully by her in-group, labelling Lerato "as actually a white person" for being "Prime of her white residence, not joining SASCO, knowing how to *sokkie*, hanging out with white friends – forgetting where she comes from". At first hurt by this rejection among her peers, Lerato is now confident in her preference for in-betweenness as identity and logic for thinking about race, "I live this life, because I love it, I enjoy it."

Building bridges for Lerato forms part of her aspiration to “show people it’s amazing, it’s not difficult and not such an issue to have diverse friends”. Wanting to teach people “especially the black people, but it’s also the same with my white friends” to not “limit or define themselves by the circumstances around them”, Lerato wants “to serve, educate and help other people become strong, independent, not just women, but men as well, thinkers, you know, people who are prepared to just really create their own history.”

As bridge-builder, Lerato hopes to help people “not to allow the things that were considered as normal [in society] that the black people stay with the black people and the white people with the white people, to sort of dictate how they should live their lives.”

PART III
RESEARCH FINDINGS

CHAPTER 10
ANALYSIS

The life stories of the participants offer a perspective on the lives of young people growing up in post-apartheid South Africa. Each narrative illustrates the uniqueness of and diversity among the lived realities part of a post-apartheid generation. Read together, their life stories also show similarities of experience and sense making, and of context, which allow for a combined reading of lives and for crosscutting themes to emerge – the particular interest of this study.

Rather than major divergences as the narratives progress, the patterns of experience and themes emerging across life narratives show ever-increasing convergences over time. The most prominent features of their experiences in and responses to racial encounters are already introduced at a young age, gain momentum at high school and mature in their struggle with race on campus. Theirs are not narratives that progress towards and from singular events of dramatic turn, but rather narratives of struggle with "naiveté" as they progress to "bridge-building", marked by critical events that intensify and develop either of these responses to issues of race. The process is messy, but emerges as a discernable process nonetheless.

The racially segregated reality of campus life and the intensity of racial conflict on campus prior to and during the Reitz incident resembled and aggravated for participants the established distances among black and white at home and at school. Similarly, the campus change interventions for racial togetherness resonated with and matured for diverse students their earlier, though hesitant, in-betweenness as framework for racial knowledge and identity.

Developed in the themes of in-betweenness, liminality, nearness, embrace and bridge-building, the chapter introduces "transitionality" as a proposed framework of meaning to make sense of the student leaders' racial knowledge and identity – a landscape of meaning over time contested by and yet transcending societal epistemologies of "ignorance". As I argue above regarding the research design of the study (Chapter 3), exploring students' lived experience to construct grounded perspectives of change on campus requires a comparative reading of the life narratives of participants. While a reading of only one student's experiences in a narrative (phenomenological) study of lives offers sufficient data to explore new perspectives, a comparative reading of several life histories allows shared themes across key categories of diversity to emerge, such as for race and gender.

This means that a comparative reading and synthesis of themes among black and white as well as female and male narratives may enable richer findings and allow for increased transferability of the findings of a study that focuses on reconciliation of diverse opposites – in this case, the opposites of race as presented in the case of Reitz. Such a reading and synthesis provide the conceptual categories that allow a grounded theory of change to emerge from the lived experiences of participants.

The study followed an iterative process in reading and writing. I first drafted each life narrative separately, drawing on detailed readings of the interview transcripts of each participant. Further readings of the transcripts enriched the descriptions of episodes in the life narratives and served as resource in the continuing cycles of coding to organise and interpret the data and develop categories for grounded theory. The reading of the life narratives as data of the study followed three cycles of narrative coding – coding suited to studies of identity development (Saldana, 2013, p. 132).

In order to organise the study data for comparative readings, I first determined similarities in the historical development of the life stories, such as major periods at home, at school and on campus. I also searched for similar sites and performances of struggle and for similar shifts in how the student leaders made sense of race. This allowed for the development of a similar temporality and narrative logic in writing the four biographies, while reflecting the unique aspects of stories within a broader narrative framework.

This first cycle of reading revealed patterns of critical incidents among narratives, which allowed me to draft the 'stories of change' as study data (Chapters 5-9) and to read the narratives comparatively (see Table 3 below). With the second cycle of reading the data, I coded the critical incidents of each narrative and the patterns of incidents across narratives for themes to make sense and interpret the data. The patterns of experiences among the narratives laid the foundation for a synthesis of themes as a conceptual scheme to build theory, which was the aim of the final cycle of coding. In the third and final cycle of reading, I re-coded the patterns of incidents and emerging themes to develop conceptual categories for building theory grounded in the lived experience of the study participants.

In this chapter, I report the patterns of participant experience; patterns of change in the student leaders' knowledge and identity; analysis of emerging themes; thematic synthesis; and emerging conceptual structure.

10.1 Patterns of experience

Similar critical incidents in the narrative data show converging patterns of experience in the lives of participants. However, differences in how similar types of incidents played out in the lives of participants also reveal diverging patterns of experience, most prominently owing to race and gender. However, an analysis of the converging and diverging patterns of incidents shows that the differences of race and gender in participant experiences continue, rather than contest, the converging themes in their struggles with racial knowledge and identity (see narrative coding of biographies below, Table 3).

Therefore, for instance, while none of the student leaders' parents discussed the apartheid past with their children, the reasons for reticence are different in black and white families. "Reticence" is coded as a converging pattern of experience, while diverging experiences are noted in black avoidance of the past due to traumatic memory and white avoidance due to guilt and shame – the different reasons for parents' silence about the past, as participants saw it. The patterns of experience read in the coding of critical incidents in the participant narratives firstly show converging historical and thematic logic, which I used to draft the life narratives for the study. Secondly, the patterns of experience revealed across the events unique to each narrative show the converging interpretative themes at play in the lives of the students.

Narrative Coding

The narrative coding of the interview data revealed the converging structure I used to present the life narratives of the participants to them historically and thematically – a logic made up of patterns of temporality (historical development), place (sites) of struggle, actors (characters) performing in and the plots develop over time in their stories of struggle. The four layers of patterns function as coordinates that together map the experiences of study participants (Saldana, 2013, p. 15). However, the layers intersect in such a way as to repeat and confirm critical incidents of change in racial knowledge and identity. For instance, church environments played an important role in the student leaders' lives and were positively associated with their shared life phase that I named "leading for change". Throughout the narratives faith communities offer counter-intuitive sites of racial togetherness and provide participants with mentors (characters) that interrupt racial distance – the churches become the focal point of new communities beyond race for the study participants.

Table 3: Critical incidents in life narratives

	Critical incidents across participant life narratives			
Timelines	**Thabelo**	**Dawie**	**Aletta**	**Lerato**
Early life	Mom's police stories Bullied at school Moved village to town	Rural racism the norm Racism of his father Family apartheid legacy	Moved city to rural Family silence to cope Birthday invitations	Absent father Move to suburb Grandma on apartheid
High school	Rural, white, Afrikaans Mom racial conflict Racial name calling Choir misconduct Protest against RCL Named a coconut	Rural, white, Afrikaans Black friend sleepover Violent initiation Church in township Youth pastor as mentor Interracial pastors	Rural, white, Afrikaans High achiever ATKV Political debate Racial quotas in sport Interracial church Slaps friend for racism	Rural, white, Afrikaans High achiever Favourite of teachers Named a coconut Not elected to RCL Shunned in teams
Arriving on campus	Rich white, poor black residences Senior victimhood talk Segregated campus life	Violent hazing in white, Afrikaans residence Only white residences Few black first-years	Requesting non-racist roommate Questions roommate for racism Familiarity of initiation	Black first-years in white Afrikaans residence Trauma of traditional initiation Crying with white peer
1st Turn	Intimacy at potency Contesting victimhood	iGubu dialogue forums New university leaders	Encounter black leader iGubu dialogue forums	Selected for sports team Elected to committee
Stepping into Leading	Distrusting management Joining RC-protest Breaking down campus	Racial politics on SRC-committee iGubu dialogue forums	Racial politics on SRC-committee Elected as Prime Primes Liaison Tour	Racial politics on SRC-committee Following the rules iGubu pilot project Integrated RC
Reitz	Arrested for protesting iGubu dialogue process Hero, but coconut Black Rector	Joining RC-protest Breaking down campus Familiarity of Reitz Joining a new church	Aware of RC-protest Disbelief at video Bomb and rape threats	New church community Learning forgiveness
Leading for change	Primes Liaison Tour of history sites Trusting the Rector Angry at the Rector Incompetent whites Resistance in residence Political resistance	Cancel hazing & social with black residences Barred political parties Racist name calling Move to black residence Launch new residence Betrayed by management	A video to honour domestic workers Move to a black residence Interim Student Committee Redesign SRC constitution Launch new residence New community of leaders	Elected as first black Prime of her residence Claimed by racial groups Black Betty; White Lerato Black students withdraw Insults by black students Black threats in meetings
2nd Turn	Initiating white leaders Racial betrayal/support	Adventure activities T-shirt messages	Meeting with Rector	Senior 'Coconut' Leader
Making new sense	New church with white pastor as 2nd father Family distrust Prefer in-betweenness Claim bridge-building Concern for reprisal	Frustration at being a "*boer*" Black mannerisms Reject apartheid silence Claim bridge-building Aspire to mentor leaders	Critique family history re domestic workers Claim bridge-building Value-driven leading Concerned with fatigue Relationships as core	Appreciate troubled past as training ground Claim bridge-building Diversity as identity Past not to dictate Want to teach others

As shown in the research design (Chapter 3), while the interviews were unstructured, participants were invited to recall and share their memories of race from as young an age as possible. As an interview strategy this approach assumed similar phases and sites of human development for students in South Africa, such as implied in their transition to campus – all students must qualify for higher education studies and do so generally through high school enrolment, implying high school and transition to campus as life phases. However, the unstructured nature of the interviews allowed participants to select for themselves what memories and phases of life they introduce and so build a timeline of their life narrative.

Converging timelines

A first converging pattern of experience emerges from similar timelines among life narratives, namely the phases of early life at home and at primary school, life at high school, transition and adjustment to campus and residence life, stepping into residence leadership roles and leading for change in post-Reitz transformation interventions. The converging narrative timelines are reflected in the similar section headings used for the different historical phases in the four accounts of the lives of the student leaders of this study (Chapter 6-9). The temporal convergence of timelines allows the reader to compare the student leaders' struggles with race and observe similar patterns of experience and of change.

The life phases of high school and transition to campus are negatively associated with racial knowledge and identity, while participants positively associate the life phases of stepping into leadership and leading for change with their struggle with race. All the participants relate negative experiences of race at high school, made aware of the impact of racial discrimination in different experiences at the time, while confronted with the intensified distance among black and white in residences when arriving on campus.

At high school, the participants became racially aware, with Thabelo's experience of white betrayal following the choir incident, Dawie's knowledge of the preferential treatment of white learners by male teachers, Aletta's handling of racial quotas in sport and when Lerato was unexpectedly not selected for her netball team or elected to the Learner Council. In the life phase of their transition to campus the four student leaders' earlier awareness of race were established as a definitive framework for belonging, most vividly for Thabelo and Dawie, who arrived on campus prior to the new policy for racial integration and the Reitz incident (2006-2007).

Aletta and Lerato arrived on campus in the first years of the implementation of the new policy for diversity (2008-2009). While a divergence of experiences is shown for gender due to their different years of entry to campus life among the men (2006-2007) and women (2008-2009), all narratives show that the move to campus aggravated racial consciousness and distance – a converging pattern across timelines.

However, all participants associate the timeline phases of stepping into leadership and leading for change positively with their struggle of knowledge and identity. In his second year, Thabelo rediscovered trust with his white peers when attending a leadership development camp for potential leaders prior to joining the residence committee. Dawie became aware of black trauma and shared life experiences in storytelling exercises at the training of incumbent leaders when first elected as residence committee member in his second year, as also was the case for Aletta at the same programme the year thereafter. Lerato stepped into leadership as part of the post-Reitz intervention for racially integrated residence committees and discovered mutuality with white peers as an elected leader. Their subsequent leadership for change for all four student leaders found expression in the process of post-Reitz interventions.

Converging sites of struggle

The second converging pattern of experience consists of the similar sites of critical incidents in the lives of participants. The sites of struggle with racial knowledge and identity refer to the sociocultural contexts of the incidents and the underlying social hierarchies that determine the position of the participants within their sociocultural context. As sociocultural contexts, the participants reveal their home, high school, church and campus residence environments as the prominent similar sites of their struggle with race.

The sites of *home* and *high school* are negatively associated with experiences of race.

All life narratives indicate silence on issues of race or the apartheid past at home and at school, while including family experiences of overt racism. The life narratives here also show a divergence of gender experience, with Thabelo's mother responding in racial terms to teacher conflicts and Dawie's father disconcerted with a black friend staying over, while their parents avoided issues of racism when interacting with Aletta and Lerato.

Still, for all students, issues of race or the apartheid past were not discussed or intentionally addressed at high school, though the learners were aware of the struggles with racial integration of their schools.

The struggle with national policy for racial integration of their school represents an important point of convergence across life experiences of the participants. All participants attended white, Afrikaans high schools with minorities of black learners enrolled in their year group. The transformation struggles with language of instruction, placement of black learners in particular classes, Afrikaans institutional cultures, team selections for sport, student discipline and racial profiles of the staff body, amongst others, are shown as similar concerns in participant experiences.

All participants attended former white, Afrikaans schools in rural parts of the country from primary school onwards, namely in the Limpopo and Free State Provinces. Here mining and farming are the main industries and determine a social architecture that construct and sustain racial hierarchies and violence.[148] These industries historically used race as organising logic, establishing a hierarchy of white ownership and black labour. Originating in the bartering relationship of settler and indigenous communities and the frontier conflicts for land, black servitude labour was further entrenched with the discovery of minerals and commercialisation of farming. This was officially legitimised in such legislation as the 1913 *Natives Land Act* and successive iterations of the *Master and Servant Act* – precursors to the myriad of apartheid policies to establish fully the power of the white master in the mine and on the farm.[149] The continued impact of this historical racial divide among black and white plays out in the lives of the participants, who, without exception, described the racial distance among black and white and the uninterrupted continuation of white racism in their communities as 'normal'.

They associate this specifically with the prominence of the Afrikaans farming community in their social environment and schools, as vividly illustrated in the narratives of the white students, Dawie and Aletta, who report the established white practice of referring to black people in derogatory terms, such as '*kaffer'* – a social practice confirmed in Thabelo's recounting of his 'first racial fight' when Pete declared him to not be a *kaffer* for being 'cool'.

[148] Evens, I. (2009) *Cultures of violence: Racial violence and the origins of segregation in South Africa and the American South*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
[149] Atkinson, D. (2007) *Going for broke: the fate of farm workers in arid South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Their narratives show their naïve reproduction of and complicity in this system, but also their attempts at resistance, confirming the well-established body of scholarship on racial integration in South African schools, in particular as it relates to former white, Afrikaans schools. Several studies show the uninterrupted continuation of racial hierarchy in these schools that focus on desegregation as a matter only of compliance to national education policy (Vandeyar, 2008; Jansen, 2009a; Ndimande, 2009; Soudien, 2010; Ndimande, 2012).

However, some exceptions do exist, such as the powerful story of the school, Diversity High, analysed by Vandeyar and Jansen (2008). As a school steeped in traditional historical white, Afrikaans culture and politics, known for its nationalist, Afrikaner and Christian ethos, the school initially opted only for racial desegregation of its learner body in compliance with national requirements, with no intent to compromise its racial hierarchy of white privilege. In this respect, Diversity High offers a precise illustration of the school's environment that participants to this study attended. It was only later that Diversity High developed a full commitment to racial integration, claiming a new name to indicate their commitment, while previously named for a former president of the apartheid state, President JG Strijdom, a "*hoëpriester van wit nasionalisme*" (a high priest of white nationalism).[150]

Without exception, the participants related experiences or incidents that confirm racial desegregation, rather than integration, at work in their schools – the appointment of the first black teacher at Thabelo's school, who was conversant only in Pedi and Afrikaans, not English; the racial micro-aggression of his teacher in commenting on the size of their family and the influence of a white parent, David's mother, to manipulate the disciplinary process following the alcohol incident with the choir.

At Aletta's school, the numbers of black learners were so few and placed in separate English-language classes that contact between black and white was limited to the sports field. She became aware of racial conflict only when confronted outside school, with policies for race quotas in provincial sports team selections. The school culture protected white naiveté, remaining Afrikaans and Christian, for instance, frowning on alcohol use and refusing political debate. For the first time, Aletta participated in a discussion of political issues at an outside leadership development programme, with no discussion of race or societal issues at school.

[150] http://152.111.1.87/argief/berigte/rapport/2008/09/29/RH/21/diversity.html, retrieved on 3 June 2015.

Part of a small minority of black learners at her school, Lerato was in the English (black) class of her year group and had very little contact with learners from the Afrikaans (white) classes. It was only on the sports field and at events of particular school societies she had joined that Lerato could interact with Afrikaans, white learners and build friendships after school. The school principal employed this separation of black and white as organising logic, once calling only black learners together to address their attire and hairstyles. He was known to punish black learners more harshly than the white learners were punished. Lerato did not have black teachers during her high school years.

Dawie witnessed the informal racism of teachers when a black learner was denied permission to hand in an essay late, which he was allowed to do the week before. His teachers, all white, would build comfortable interaction with white learners, but not so with black learners.

Again, it was only on the sports field that he would meet and build friendship across racial divides. His experience of pervasive violent initiation for sports teams shows the continuation of the military motive of control and humiliation undergirding traditional male Afrikaner rites of passage (Morrell, Jewkes & Lindegger, 2012, p. 7) as a standing part of a school culture that maintains hierarchies of power and subordination – the same hierarchy that maintains racial bias. What these experiences indicate is the important theme of wilful ignorance and continued racial micro-aggressions[151] that mark historically white and Afrikaans schools in rural regions of South Africa.

However, these accounts also introduce instances of counter-narratives to the hegemony of race and ignorance, such as the white teacher at Thabelo's school that intentionally introduced soccer to cater for black learners.

Other such instances include Aletta's nomination by her school to attend the ATKV[152] Youth Congress where politics were openly discussed; the lesbian coach of Lerato's netball team and the mentorship of his youth pastor that exposed Dawie to black communities and interracial love. These incidents of counter-narrative to the prevailing ignorance contract of their schools and communities would later play an important role as they progressed from ignorance to agency.

[151] Micro-aggressions refer to subtle, daily acts of racism that together establish a systematic bias of white superiority and black inferiority; not gross and crippling abuses (Huber & Solorzano, 2015, 299).
[152] The 'Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging' historically fostered Afrikaner culture with artistic school programmes.

Campus residences as sites of struggle at the outset of the participant narratives are negatively associated with race, but later positively associated as sites of change leadership. For all students their awareness of racial in- and out-groups and racial distance are aggravated as they arrived on campus, but as they stepped into leadership and joined the post-Reitz interventions, their residences became the environments where they actively worked towards racial integration – the sites to realise a new sense of knowledge and identity.

Thabelo attempted racial integration in the disastrous initiation of new residence committee members. Lerato became the first black chairperson of a traditionally white residence. Dawie and Aletta, as white students, moved to black residences to support racial integration and established new residences as racially integrated student associations.

The student leaders' experiences at *church* are positively associated with their struggle with race. Across narratives, the churches provided counter-sites of racial togetherness, though in different life phases. By contrast, the participants also related negative experiences of race at the traditional Afrikaans Church, *KovsieKerk*, which presents an additional pattern of critical incidents and characters as antagonists of change. All the established churches continued racial distance by adhering to the societal codes of separated religious practice – churches argued for diverse cultural and language as cause for only black or white membership and so maintained racial hierarchy; also in campus ministries.

However, their earlier involvement in church provided Dawie and Aletta with alternative experiences of race at high school. At church Dawie interacted with an interracial couple of church leaders and with black township youth, while Aletta interacted with black youth serving as Sunday school teacher at her church of mostly black membership. They continued their involvement at interracial churches on campus, gaining mentorship and inspiration to lead for change from their pastors and peers.

Thabelo and Lerato found acceptance in their non-racial church communities, gaining mentorship and guidance in dealing with anger and choosing forgiveness as they were leading for change. Their churches offered alternative sites of experience for each of the student leaders, due to the different racial hierarchies to what prevailed at school, in their home communities and on campus. The life narratives show that whereas established racial distance and hierarchy continued between home, school and campus, their church student communities disrupted the established hierarchy of white privilege and black subordination.

This is most vividly shown in the church experiences of all participants during the timeline phase when leading for change, when their pastors intentionally challenged racial segregation and distance.

The racial hierarchy of white privilege and black subordination in their home communities continued in the structure of campus and residence life, with established, richer white residences, and politicised, poorer black residences. However, whereas the established racial hierarchy at school functioned in the background of their life worlds, leading all students to complicity in this hierarchy, on campus it was pronounced and claimed as a foundation for social organisation. The overt nature of racial segregation in residences on campus repositioned the participants in similar roles of power when representing their racial in-group. However, while distanced from their peers in out-groups, as leaders they had equal opportunity to continue or disrupt the established hierarchy. In all narratives, the participants show experiences of conforming to and of disrupting the established racial hierarchy of campus cultures in subsequent timeline phases.

This shift from conforming to disrupting the established hierarchies also represents a progression in their development as characters (actors) in their stories – a pattern of experience that shows a character development from actors without agency for change, to authors with agency for bridge-building.

Converging characters

The third converging pattern of experience is the similar positions as narrative characters the participants perform alongside their peers and figures of authority in the data. Constructed as biographies of their struggles with racial knowledge and identity, the study participants are the main characters of the narratives.

Owing to the focus of the study on the shifts in racial knowledge and identity as proxies for the four student leaders' experiences of change, the plot development of their life stories largely overlaps with the development of their characters as actors in the narratives – the positions they hold, the roles they assume, and their behaviours as narrative performances.

The shift among participants from naiveté or victimhood to co-authorship of change offers the most important plot and character development in the life narratives. Thabelo shifted from being an angry protester to the chairperson of a racially integrated committee.

Dawie shifted from being a chairperson of a traditional white residence to joining a black residence and then to founder of a racially integrated residence. Aletta shifted from naiveté and then shame following Reitz to leading the redesign of campus politics and then to becoming the founder of a racially integrated residence. Lerato shifted from racial fear as first-year to being elected first black chairperson of a white residence in her second year.

However, the list of similar actors across narratives includes other characters in different timeline phases and at different sites of struggle – characters associated either positively or negatively with shifts in racial knowledge and identity as *protagonists* or *antagonists* of change. As the main characters of their life narratives, the study participants also performed protagonist or antagonist roles in their own journeys. They performed antagonist roles for change when conforming to the norms of racial in-groups, as is the case prior to the post-Reitz interventions. However, these roles also continued on campus and during the post-Reitz interventions.

Thabelo fulfilled a protagonist role in his struggle with race when challenging the established position of racial politics in his committee and as chairperson of his residence, taking a stand for change and racial integration as a critical incident in the plot of his journey to become a "bridge-builder". However, he performed an antagonist role in his narrative of change when, as chairperson, he used hazing to build unity between black and white committee members – an incident that caused distrust among diverse constituencies and disrupted the progress achieved in his residence for change and eroding his confidence as leader for change.

While the study participants considered the primary group of characters for narrative analysis, the performances of peers make up a second group of important actors in the life narratives.

A distinct feature of their 'peers' as narrative characters is the often-simultaneous roles as *protagonists* and *antagonists* they perform. Far more than any other group of characters and across timelines, it was the student leaders' peer groups that had both a positive and a negative impact on their racial knowledge and identity, rather than only positive or negative. However, the performances of peers reveal a divergence of experiences for black and white study participants. The tension of protagonist and antagonist performances of their in-groups was much more pronounced for the black students, Thabelo and Lerato, than for the white students, Dawie and Aletta.

It was Thabelo's white friends who build his appreciation of whites positively as out-group, but also those same friends who betrayed him at high school when they received preferential treatment in school discipline. It was Thabelo's black friends who valued his leadership capacity and politically galvanised his initiative to step into leadership, but who betrayed him following the hazing incident and distanced themselves from him.

It was Lerato's white friends and teachers at school who betrayed her trust and did not elect her as member of the Learner Council or member of the netball team. On the contrary, the majority of white students at her campus residence selected her for their netball team and elected her as residence committee member the very next year. Her black peers at school and on campus pejoratively called Lerato a coconut for not adhering to the stereotypes of her in-group, but also claimed Lerato as representative of black students and campus transformation when elected as chairperson of her residence.

While present in their life narratives, the shifts between positive and negative responses by their peers to their lives are far less pronounced in Dawie and Aletta's experiences. Neither are publicly humiliated or consistently challenged for their change leadership and association with black students as out-group, but rather silently ostracised from traditional friendships and left to find new in-groups, such as in their new faith communities.

Dawie and Aletta experienced this distance when they challenged the established traditions of peer seniority and initiation of Afrikaans institutional cultures either at school or in their residences and when the move to black residences – it simply "goes quiet" around them.

The continuous shifts to and from protagonist or antagonist behaviour performed by their in-groups revealed the reality of revenge for in-betweenness, or what I call *reprisal* in this study, as critical aspect of experience of change in the lives of participants.

The protagonist and antagonist roles of characters were less fluid in the performances of authority figures – a third group of narrative characters in the data.

The participants used the sites of struggle at different phases in the narrative timelines as framework to introduce the various authority figures that influenced their struggle with racial knowledge and identity.

In their home environments, the student leaders' parents and their peers performed similar character roles, for the most part as antagonists. While different in their histories, motivations and life trajectories, a pattern of silence about apartheid and its legacies emerged in how their families responded to the student leaders' questions about the past and traumatic experiences with racial hierarchy. Their silence born either from trauma or shame, as black families having to deal with the apartheid legacies of pain and anger, and as white families having to face their complicity and guilt, participant families preferred not to talk about the past. Their parents did not offer participants guidance to make sense of racial hierarchies in their lifeworld and at best shared, but did not discuss, their memories of the apartheid trauma.

These patterns were most vivid in the lives of Thabelo and Dawie, with Thabelo's mother and Dawie's father introducing racist thinking in conversations. While his mother shared some memories of traumatic apartheid incidents with Thabelo, as in the case of the brutal murder of a family friend, and he was somewhat aware of the political involvement of his family during the liberation struggle, history and memory were not prominent at home nor often discussed. Rather, Thabelo witnessed anger at and distrust of whites in his mother's responses to racial messages, responses he often considered unreasonable and would directly challenge. During his studies on campus, this distance of ignorance would increase between Thabelo and his mother, leaving Thabelo at the end of his narrative to confront his mother and brother for their black victimhood and distrust of whites. In Dawie's family, apartheid's history was also not discussed but for the memories of pass laws that his father shared with him when pressed by Dawie to do so.

This left Dawie angry at their silence, disappointed that his parents rather wanted to avoid the past and then take ownership of their guilt. Dawie considered his father hypocritical for his continued racism at home, making racist comments about their domestic workers "behind their backs" and unable to interact with Bill, his black friend, when he stayed over at Dawie's house. His father did not shift from this place of silence during Dawie's studies on campus, further troubling their relationship with a racist comment when Dawie moved to a black residence as part of the reconciliation project on campus.

Aletta and Lerato's parents did not overtly introduce racial framing to how they talked about and made sense of the world, but employed silences about issues of race and memory as tools to avoid pain or shame, which limited their daughters' ability to engage with the racial hierarchies of their environments.

In Aletta's family, silence was a theme in general and not only in relation to history and apartheid. As shown in her mother's not attending the funeral of her uncle, her mother's brother, her family was less sentimental that those of the other participants, not keeping many pictures of family events and not discussing issues of the day, but rather focusing on what is at hand, living morally good lives, but not standing up for a cause. Socially introverted, friends with only some families in their community and as members of an interracial church, Aletta's family seemed liminal in the racially conservative environment – a silence that Aletta would challenge after returning from campus by questioning their family habits of separate utensils and cutlery reserved for use by their domestic workers.

Their trauma of rejection by her father entrenched for Lerato's family their silence on difficult memory and history. Silence helped her mother to survive the ordeal, but it also precluded any discussion of traumatic events. Living with her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Lerato would ask about apartheid, only not to be answered by her mother and grandmother. She knew they had survived traumatic ordeals during apartheid, refusing to talk about the past. Her great-grandmother was prepared to talk about the past, but only to complain about her constant fear of rape and crime, longing for an "orderly society" of apartheid.

Not shifting from this strategy of silence, when Lerato as first-year on campus complained bitterly about racial bias in the white residence she joined on campus, her mother replied, "Ignore them, they don't pay your school fees."

The silences of their families established a sort of amnesia among participants, somewhat aware of histories of racial injustice, but without a nuanced sense of memory, leaving them to discover for themselves the structure and codes of racial hierarchy at school and elsewhere. The silence continued at school and at campus, maintained by the structures and performances of the contract of ignorance that permeated their communities.

In all narratives, the participants related incidents of conflict with their families as they transcend racial hierarchy and grow confident in new identities of in-betweenness. Thabelo debated racial comments regarding his church with his mother and brother, Dawie moved to a black residence in the face of sarcastic comments of his father, Aletta questioned her family's established habits with domestic workers and Lerato debated the apartheid past and victimhood with her father-in-law.

However, in all narratives, their parents did not prevent or discourage them from interacting with and making friends with either black or white peers, welcoming their friends at home and supporting the students when leading for change on campus. The only exception to this pattern was Dawie's father, who made a derogatory remark regarding black students when Dawie moved to a black residence in support of the change project on campus – a response not shared by his mother, who encouraged and supported him in this move. However, their parents' openness to their friendships across racial barriers did not break the silence of their families regarding racism or the apartheid past, but were rather an expression of the wish to leave the past behind – a forlorn hope that without actual memories of, and rather now avoiding the past, their children would together overcome the legacies of the past.

For the most part, teachers as authority figures at school performed antagonist roles by conforming to and continuing the established racial hierarchies and avoiding dealing with instances of racial bias among students or in school systems. All participants courageously challenged particular aspects of the institutional school culture in different ways, but in no instance did they relate teacher support when leading counter -culturally. Dawie, for instance, received no support from teachers when he cancelled initiation in his cricket team at school and on campus, while university managers who promised financial support to continue his studies, betrayed his trust when they failed to do so.

The dynamic of absent school staff continued in residences on campus when participants could not depend on the support and guidance of residence heads or university managers when leading for change. Thabelo and Dawie report the absence of residence heads as they designed new initiatives for change as part of the change interventions, while Aletta could not depend for guidance on her new residence head, who was also new to the position and the established residence culture. Lerato's experience in her residence represents an exception to the rule in this regard, as her election as chairperson in 2010 took place in the third year of post-Reitz interventions when the campus climate for change had shifted from what it was in 2008, the year of the Reitz incident.

However, all the narratives related the protagonist role of the new university leadership in the appointments of the new Rector and Dean of Students, albeit reflected in different experiences and valued for different reasons in each life narrative. They are the most prominent characters as authority figures in the post-Reitz change process on campus.

Important aspects of the character performance of the new university leaders in the stories were incidents that showed clarity of vision and an uncompromising commitment to change, real care for students, and trust in students to lead change.

The fourth group of narrative characters relevant to the converging patterns of experience in the life narratives of students come from churches as sites of struggle.

Positively associated with each of the student leaders' struggle with racial knowledge and identity, the pastors of their faith communities performed protagonist roles in mentoring students for change leadership. All the students found inspiration in the uncompromising message for racial togetherness and reconciliation of the senior pastors in their churches, specifically following Reitz. However, the youth pastors of their churches also played a major role by building their confidence to lead counter intuitively to the racial hierarchies of campus.

All the participants were involved with faith-based associations at school and would join similar church communities as students. The youth pastor of his congregation mentored Dawie while at high school in different perspectives of masculinity, focusing on positive values of servant leadership. Under his pastor's guidance Dawie led outreach initiatives to townships and worked with other faith-based organisations with racially integrated leaders.

The senior pastor of his newfound church community rekindled Thabelo's courage to lead beyond race and to move from victimhood and anger to forgiveness – Thabelo considered his pastor a second father.

A white youth pastor of her congregation mentored Lerato and played an important part in her decision to contest the seat as chairperson of her residence, while Aletta built an alternative sense of self beyond race in her role as Sunday school teacher of her mostly black congregation at high school.

The roles protagonist and antagonist characters play in how the student leaders struggled with racial knowledge and identity are significant as they caused, enacted and influenced the incidents and meanings attached to events in the life stories of the student leaders – they co-authored the storyline and narrative plot of these four students' struggle with race (Holley and Colyar, 2009, p. 681).

Converging plots

The patterns of participant experience reveal convergences in the narrative plots of their stories of struggle with racial knowledge and identity. Each life narrative shows a progression over time in the development of its main character. The narrative characters develop from naïve adoption to conscious disruption of established racial hierarchies and to authorship for reconciliation between racial in- and out-groups. Though these were experienced in different incidents and with different positionalities in racial and gender hierarchies, similar motifs in the participant life stories indicate similar plots across narratives. In turn, the similar plots converge to reveal an overall plot as thematic structure of the narratives texts of the study. Two major transitions in character development of participants provide the narrative motifs that holistically make up the overall plot, namely the shifts in racial knowledge and identity from *naiveté* to *authorship* and from an underlying *in-betweenness* to conscious *bridge-building* as logic for knowledge and identity.

The life narratives as data reflect the overall plot of change thematically in three ways. Firstly, the paragraph headings of critical incidents reflect the narrative motifs of the plot. Secondly, critical incidents of shift or "turn" in how participants make sense of race are introduced as stand-alone sections of that narrative. Thirdly, each life story concludes with participants reflecting on their in-betweenness by commenting on "bridge-building" as conceptual framework to make sense of their struggle with racial knowledge and identity.

The plot of change in race knowledge and identity in Thabelo's life opened with his confident naiveté at school and then follows several shifts. Thabelo shifted first from naiveté to black victimhood in residence life on campus and then to a rediscovery of mutuality with white students and the value of in-betweenness in leading diverse students. A third shift occurred when Thabelo faced reprisal and then betrayal by his in-group following his initiative for change in the initiation of committee members. A fourth shift occurred when Thabelo found new solidarities beyond race in his church community and with white and black student leaders who also worked for racial reconciliation.

Thabelo's struggle with race repeatedly engaged the "anger of victimhood" as a motif discouraging personal change.

In Dawie's life, the narrative plot opened with his gradual disgust and initiative to disrupt the established cultures of initiation at school, followed by a first shift to white victimhood in his residence when confronted with institutional interventions for change. A third shift occurred when Dawie in the post-Reitz interventions engaged with new leaders on campus and at his church that modelled clear visions for change and showed authentic care for students. A fourth shift occurred when Dawie discovered his complicity in violent hierarchies during arrangements for the potency camp and further matured in leading change. As a result, he led for change, also in a black residence, and thereafter he discovered white betrayal as an act of reprisal.

Dawie's struggle with race engaged the "violence of tradition" as a motif discouraging personal change.

The plot of change in Aletta's life opens with her naïve complicity in the established racial hierarchies of her school and community, though exposed to alternative experiences of race in her church community. A first shift occurred in her gradual awareness of white privilege as she travelled out of town while at school and met black students on campus. A second shift occurred when she joined dialogue forums with black students that shared their stories of apartheid trauma in the post-Reitz interventions. She discovered unique and shared traumas with black students. A third shift occurred after her election as chairperson when Aletta joined a Primes Liaison Tour that introduced her to the apartheid past.

A fourth and significant shift happened when the Rector agreed to trust Primes (chairpersons) for transformation in residences and cancelled an intervention to integrate residence committees racially, leaving it to students to achieve by themselves. She moved to a black residence and chaired the redesign of student governance, but soon encountered the silence of her in-group – an act of reprisal.

Aletta's struggle with race engaged "shame" as motif discouraging personal change.

Lerato's narrative plot opens with naïve avoidance as survival strategy in the racial hierarchy of her school and community. A first shift occurred in the unexpected rejection Lerato faced when she was not elected as Learner Representative nor selected for the school netball team. The trauma revealed to her the reality of the racial hierarchy she wilfully ignored.

A second shift occurred when Lerato joined a traditionally white and Afrikaans residence on campus, which selected her for the first netball team and as residence committee member as part of the post-Reitz interventions – the experiences offered her a sense of belonging in the face of rejection elsewhere. A third shift occurred when she was elected as the first black chairperson of her residence, following which she faced acts of reprisal by white and black. A fourth shift developed in her discovery and friendship with another senior, black student leader facing the same experience of rejection by fellow black students for their sense of belonging among whites. Lerato's struggle with race engaged "rejected belonging" as motif discouraging personal change.

10.2 Patterns of change

The critical incidents that make up the life narratives of the study show shifts taking place over time in participants struggle with race – the patterns of change revealed in the incidents of "turn" in their lives and the resulting shifts in their sense making of race and behaviours for change. The patterns of change relate to the narrative plot, which I have defined in the narrative character transitions from naiveté to authorship and from in-betweenness to bridge-building. The critical incidents across narratives reveal four major patterns of change to achieve these transitions, namely for naiveté that is *learned, reproduced, radicalised and disrupted and for in-betweenness that is compelled, attempted, deterred* and *embraced*.

The incidents also reveal an important fourth transition for participant experiences of in-betweenness, namely the transition of in-betweenness from an underlying and discredited to conscious and preferred logic of knowledge and identity in bridge-building – a "flip" from a *latent* (underlying) to a *manifest* (surface) epistemology through "embrace". The established racial hierarchies of their sociocultural contexts provide for the first pattern of change across participant life narratives – a pattern of incidents that show events and performances that reproduced ignorance, but also established and compelled the ambiguity of in-betweenness.

Reproduced distance that compels ambiguity

At home, at school and in campus residences participants were bound to and subtly aware of their particular positions in the racial hierarchy of their environments, though naïvely disregarding its impact in their lives. The continued racial hierarchy from school to campus also determined the divergent patterns of experiences of race among life narratives.

Dawie and Aletta, as white participants, were less aware of race at school, while Thabelo and Lerato were well aware and faced traumatic incidents of racial discrimination, though refusing to accept the incidents as racial at the time. So established were the racial hierarchies at high school and their positionalities within the social structure that Thabelo and Lerato were lethargic, and Dawie and Aletta naively indifferent, when dealing with racist incidents at school.

Racism confronted Thabelo most severely in the choir incident. The racial bias of the school and its parent community was evident in the lighter disciplinary steps taken against white learners as opposed to black learners who had joined in the illegal drinking of alcohol at the school eisteddfod and in David's avoidance of punishment that his mother successfully negotiated with the school – while Thabelo lost all his honours, his white friend, David, continued as head boy of the school. Significantly, though, at the time, Thabelo did not consider the incident racial, but a matter of favouritism, illustrating both the reality of white privilege in that environment and his own ignorance as part of that social contract. It was only later when he was frustrated with the agenda of the Learner Representative Council that Thabelo would begin to resist this hegemony, rallying learners to protest a lack of attention to incidents of crime black learners faced. However, this did not mean that he was aware of or addressed the racial bias of the Council.

Thabelo considered their bias indicative of bad leadership on the Council's part, not racial bias, which illustrates his continued refusal to acknowledge the reality of racial hierarchy and his subordinate position as black learner. Adept at moving between black and white social codes, as illustrated when his (black) partner for the Valentine's ball called him a 'coconut' for dancing with white learners, his choices for identity and sense making of racial conflicts around him inadvertently solidified his ignorance, an ignorance of avoidance – what Steyn calls "survivalist ignorance" (2012, 20).

However, Thabelo also achieved well at school, participating in and selected to represent the school in sports and cultural teams, and elected as learner representative. This illustrates the confusing reality of Thabelo's life at school, symbolising as black leader in a white environment the transition to racial inclusivity sought in the transformation of schools after apartheid, but simultaneously as top achiever legitimising and reproducing the underlying racial hierarchies prevalent in school and community. This reality compelled Thabelo's ambiguity and in-betweenness among racial in- and out-groups.

It seems all the more strange that Thabelo would remain ignorant to racial prejudice when his mother shared with him stories of racial trauma and modelled codes of racial distrust from a young age. It was the very personal and profound moment to overcome public embarrassment, when as a young boy his friends taunted him for not wearing underwear, which offers an explanation. Initially embarrassed by the incident, Thabelo decided to find new friends who would accept him, overcoming that trauma, finding new friends and gaining popularity to such an extent that he eventually was elected head boy of his primary school – going from 'zero to hero'. The experience established for Thabelo a confident sense of self that also sustained him at high school, affirmed by his achievements and friendships across racial divides, enabling him to avoid black victimhood modelled by others, but also enabling his ignorance that left him in disbelief when confronted with racism.

Much of her ignorance for survival for Lerato was born from family trauma, affecting, but not responding to overt experiences of race. Growing up in a happy home, during her primary school years, Lerato's sense of a sheltered life collapsed when her father left home, leaving her to struggle with emotions of rejection, questioning her father's love and acceptance.

Following the example set by her mother, who survived the pain of divorce by not talking about it, but rather getting on with life and often instructing her to do the same, Lerato adopted avoidance as response to traumatic events. Struggling with this trauma and resulting fears of rejection, mimicking her mother's strategy for survival to focus rather on the good moments in life, Lerato inevitably at school and elsewhere opted rather to avoid than deal with racial conflicts. Following a path of least resistance, Lerato became popular at school, not only endearing herself to teachers, becoming their "*witbroodjie*" (their favourite), but also building close friendships with black and white learners. Sharing similar tastes in youth culture with other kids from the suburbs, she opted for a cosmopolitan sense of self, refusing to live life determined by 'the colour of her skin' and therefore distant from and often named a 'coconut' by fellow learners from the township.

Still, Lerato was aware of and often angry at racial distinctions at school, such as the segregated placement of learners in class at school with all the black learners in the English class, the limited number of black members in the learner representative council and her regular experience of exclusion when unable to afford the fees to participate in programmes geared for the richer, white community.

Lerato opted to ‘turn a blind eye’ for the benefit she could gain, adopting the protective ignorance modelled by her mother, and yet therein also offering a resistance of kind to the established racial hierarchy by leveraging its opportunities for her own benefit – what Steyn calls the opportunism of the ‘trickster’ to survive oppression (2012, p. 19).

However, in her senior years at high school, Lerato were powerfully reminded of her subordinate position in the established hierarchies of her school when, while supported by her achievements until then, she was not elected as a member of the learner representative council and also not selected for the school’s first netball team. Yet, while dealing with the unexpected and traumatic rejection at school, making way for white learners who she believed did not deserve to take her place, Lerato did not consider the incidents as racial, but rather as incidents of favouritism. The learners who took her place in the council and the netball team came from families with parents heavily involved in and supportive of school programmes, also financially. The experience left Lerato confused, not only betrayed by the system she supported and reproduced, but also betrayed by her survival strategy of protective avoidance – the same strategy that enabled her to cross the racial divides and enabled her to navigate white privilege. This was a life that was leading Lerato to build knowledge and identity in-between black and white.

At the opposite end of the racial hierarchy, Aletta’s experiences at school offered a stereotypical view of white privilege. Aletta’s school was a safe space for her, protected from the traumas faced by black learners and confirming her naïve sense of normality. With very few black learners in her school, and those attending transferring with her from primary school, familiar and assimilated in the established cultures and hierarchies of school and community, Aletta was never confronted by overt racial conflict nor engaged in discussions on race or social issues.

Inevitably assuming the privileged (and racist) realities of school and community as the norm, she focused on and achieved well in academics and sport, elected to deputy head girl and selected for the provincial hockey team. The blindness and silence on issues of racial injustice of her school and community also extended to her home environment, with her family having relocated from urban, cosmopolitan Johannesburg to the rural Free State at some point. While considering them not racist – the family were members of a Pentecostal church with a mostly black membership, but also not activist, her parents did not discuss social issues with or influence her decisions in any way, rather confirming their trust in her own abilities.

Whether due to their arrival from the city as outsiders to the established local and traditional Afrikaans community, or as strangers to the religiosity of the established Afrikaans churches as members of their interracial congregation, her parents were also not well established in the community, with few friends locally and a distant relationship with their broader families – in one instance, her mother did not attend the funeral of a close family member in another province.

Seemingly not valuing sentiment and memory, Aletta was not taught to notice, question or remember, but rather to work hard, be good and achieve well in the system. Yet, from a young age, Aletta had had a sense of and concern for fairness, intentionally attending the birthday parties of poorer classmates at primary school, and teaching Sunday school classes at her congregation, with mostly black children in her class at high school. At school, she often challenged race talk among her peers, to such an extent that her friends moderated their language in her presence.

Her naïve attempts at resistance remained foreign in the established culture of her school and community, painting her as a known 'progressive', but also recognising her for her integrity as a leader. However, her alternative experiences of race strengthened her sense of self as a good leader rather than make her aware of the racial distances among black and white.

It was only in her final year at school that the silence on race was interrupted, with her experience of racial quotas in sport and political debate at a leadership conference. As captain of her provincial hockey team Aletta had to lead a team that included black members selected through the quota system. While the overriding talk at school and in her community protested what they considered unfair bias to allow players with less merit to gain places on the team, Aletta intentionally reached out to those players to build a cohesive team, often visiting and spending time in their rooms on tour when other white players would not. Secretly she rejoiced when her black teammates consistently proved to be better players then those that fell out of the team due to the quota system.

The experience mirrored that of her nomination to attend the annual school leaders' conference of the ATKV where, for the first time during her school career, speakers addressed and debated social and political issues, expecting them to hold and argue contrary views – an experience that countered the protected, safe and uncritical culture of her school and community.

While still blind to the totality of racial injustice in a system of privilege, these events influenced her awareness of, and affront with racism to such an extent that when applying for residence placement on campus for the following year, she specifically requested a 'non-racist' roommate in her application letter. She now developed in sense of distance with her white in-group, gaining awareness of the challenges faced by black learners. Aletta now discovered a place of in-betweenness.

Much similar to Aletta, Dawie's home and school communities were traditionally white, Afrikaans and Christian, with most families farming in the area or employed in public service, as teachers and police officers – an environment that considered racial bias a normal part of life, as was also the case at home where his father was openly racist, often making derogatory remarks about their domestic workers. Racial distance was also sustained at school, with the all-too-familiar limited numbers of black learners enrolled and their placement in the English class of every year group effectively preventing close contact between black and white learners. However, even though most black leaners were in the English class, his school placed a small number of black learners in every class of every year group, facilitating contact between black and white learners.

This allowed for the friendship between Dawie and Pete, a black learner who lived in the township, whose parents were also in public service as police officers and thus of similar 'economic status'. As friends, they were close enough for Dawie not only to consider Pete as part of his intimate group of friends, but also to invite him to stay over at his home, prepared to face and negotiate his father's racism. In the context of his traditional and conservative family and community, this was an act of resistance.

The presence of black learners in his class also allowed for some awareness of racial bias. With only white teachers at the school, Dawie noticed their bias in how they related to learners, being stricter with and less jovial towards black learners than towards white learners. This Dawie saw for himself when he was allowed to hand in an assignment late, but a fellow black learner, who requested the same allowance from the same teacher the week thereafter, was refused.

As in Aletta's case, it was encounters outside school that had the most impact on Dawie's sense of right and wrong, namely through the (counter-cultural) mentorship of the youth pastor of his congregation and their programmes of community outreach.

Mentored deeply in faith and integrity by his pastor, spending time assisting in poor (black) communities and interacting with the interracial couple leading the youth ministry of another church, Dawie could see beyond the constraints of ignorance that ruled his community. Dawie had moved away from conforming to the norms of his in-group and gained confidence to challenge tradition from in-between positions in the racial hierarchy of his school and community.

However, while noticing racial distance among learners at school, as well as the racial bias of teachers and his father's racism at home, Dawie never specifically acted against or discussed his unease with racism with his teachers or parents. His struggle with the established cultures of initiation offers an explanation.

A major part of traditional male rites of passage in the white Afrikaans community and an enduring legacy of the heterodoxy (Leitch, 2006, p. 77) of militarisation of white men during apartheid, led to inhumane and violent hazing remaining part of their school culture – disallowed in class, but actively used on the sports field.

With sport the being most prominent feature of their school culture and pride, it was the pervasive violence all boys playing sport were subjected to that galvanised his resistance, cancelling initiation when he became captain of the cricket team.

As Dawie moved to campus, violent masculinity would remain a major site of struggle, with rumours of fearsome initiation in men's residences on campus at first discouraging him from applying for residence placement on campus, and then actually facing initiation as first-year in his residence. Initiation was the most powerful tool to sustain ignorance and racial distance on campus, used to replicate students' commitment to the institutional cultures and traditional hierarchies that maintain white privilege across generations.

As the participant narratives confirm, residence cultures and traditions were cornerstones of identity and knowledge for the campus community, ensuring uninterrupted continuity of the contract of ignorance between school and campus, and home and community.

The continuation and aggravation of established racial hierarchies in campus and residence cultures provide for the second pattern of shifts in the life narratives of the study participants – a pattern of incidents that show events and performances that radicalised ignorance and deterred any claim to, or the development of in-betweenness.

Radical ignorance that deters in-betweenness

A former whites-only campus, Afrikaans and Christian in its ethos, the campus community at UFS repeated much of what the study participants had experienced at school. Here also the desegregation of student life was attempted, without compromising the traditional institutional hierarchies and cultures, maintaining a system of white privilege and black subordination.

Arriving on campus, Aletta stepped into a familiar environment of Afrikaans culture, protected and safe under the guidance of a motherly matron, while Dawie stepped into the familiar trauma of violent initiation among Afrikaans men. However, 'comfortable familiarity' did not mark their arrival on campus for Thabelo and Lerato. Thabelo was confused by the black-only membership of his residence and the distance from white students. Lerato was confused at the small numbers of black students and racial distance among students in her residence. Their sense of, and their confusion with racial hierarchy on campus were an outcome of the intensity of racial segregation on campus.

As shown in their experiences on campus, none of the participants could escape the segregated tracks for black and white life on campus. As at school, white and black learners were separated in Afrikaans or English classes; similarly, on campus, white and black students also attended separate classes. As at school, very few black teachers were appointed; on campus, most lecturers and managers were white, while service workers were black. As black and white students lived in separated communities at home, interacting mostly on the sports field, residences on campus were separated as black or white. As at school, where black students could often not afford to attend events, black students could also not afford to attend all student life programmes on campus. Similarly, as at school, the racial distance among learners continued in their social environment, their families, their churches and their politics. On the campus, black and white students attended either black or white churches, frequented different social venues and politically supported black or white parties.

However, campus life differed from the school and home community in two important ways, namely in its intentionality and its intensity of racial segregation. While not the formal policy of the university, race-based policies to recruit and place students in either black or white residences were employed by the university as daily management practice, and used as organising logic in student life programmes generally, and in student politics specifically.

Religious and political student societies built racially exclusive membership, confirming the familiar notion that racial hierarchy and distance were 'the way things are'. Combined with the parallel-medium language policy of the university that established separate white and black faculty classes, the racialised social architecture of campus life created an extraordinary scale of racial segregation – a student life of two campuses, one privileged and the other victimised.

Nevertheless, it was the wilful ignorance at play in student engagement that fostered the intensity of racial distance on campus. Most visible in its tacit support of the historically white cultures and traditions of residences, such as the hazing of first-year students or newly elected student leaders, students were for the most part left to their own devices in organising daily student life. Residence heads did not interrupt the established traditions, often simply remaining absent from daily life in the men's residences. Student leaders were not engaged in matters of change or guided to new programmes for student life that would eliminate racial distance.

While this would change in the post-Reitz interventions, the established institutional culture of distanced management and tacit support of racially distanced residences created severe distrust on campus and a resulting and pervasive sense of victimhood between both black and white students. Campus life radically racialised students, not only continuing to reproduce the racial hierarchies of home, families, schools and communities, but intentionally segregating and engaging them as black or white; male or female. Gone were the spaces and opportunities for interaction, replaced by the loud voices of their peers that legitimised their segregation, powerfully supported by the biased traditions of membership and achievement in residence communities.

Whereas at school all the study participants could claim a position of in-betweenness with a sense of a moral high ground when challenging injustice, on campus, their racial in-groups met any ambiguity in how they related as black or white with opposition. In contrast to life at school, which compelled an underlying in-betweenness, life on campus deterred the growing in-betweenness in the lives of the student leaders.

However, while all participants adopted naiveté, and reproduced and resisted aspects of racial hierarchy in different ways, their positionalities of race and gender in the hierarchies presented black and white, and female and male with unique struggles.

These divergences emerged from being either subordinate (black and/or female) or privileged (white and/or male) in the established hierarchy and ignorance of their community. Their positions established for the participants their trajectories of racial struggle that would intensify on campus and become important contexts for their conscientisation and change leadership.

As white, Afrikaans students, familiar with the privileges and traumas of this campus culture, Dawie and Aletta managed the transition from school to campus residence well, gaining trust among the majority white membership and were elected as leaders of their residences. Thabelo and Lerato first needed to make sense of their unfamiliar positions of blackness on campus before they could lead their residences; Thabelo claiming an angry victimhood and Lerato assimilating with whiteness. Dawie and Aletta's ignorance consisted of their indifference to issues of race due to their privileged position as members of the white, Afrikaans and Christian community.

On the other hand, Thabelo and Lerato adopted ignorance as survival strategy due to their subordinate position as black, non-Afrikaans students. This made their ignorance wilful and successful, supported by the protective ignorance of their families and achievement among their peers, while Aletta and Dawie held their ignorance as part of the familiar and protective social architecture that privileged every aspect of their identity and knowledge. Different to Thabelo and Lerato, they did not have to be conversant in a second or third language, learn diverse codes of social interaction to negotiate home, school, suburb and township, or question and reflect on their racial and ethnic heritage and identities. Aletta and Dawie were also not required to confront their position in the racial hierarchy on campus; quite simply as campus life and their residences maintained the same system of white privilege, affirming who they were in a super system of racial sameness in residences.

Differently from Dawie and Aletta, Lerato and Thabelo needed to be conversant in the codes and performances of whiteness for success in the racial hierarchy, learning Afrikaans, developing styles and popular tastes in youth culture, joining programmes and sports teams and establishing intimate friendships with white learners. This was not necessarily as a deliberate strategy, but rather part of a process of fitting in, assimilating with their environment, with their 'white' choices emanating from their actual preferences.

However, it was their distance from other black learners who did not reach across the racial divide or achieve such success in the hierarchy of school and community that illustrates the difficulties their in-betweenness implied. Named 'coconuts' by black learners and students – not from the suburbs – but from the township; for speaking English with a certain accent; or dancing with white learners or playing 'white' sport from a young age, Thabelo and Lerato faced black ambiguity – at home still employing and valuing their ethnic heritage, language and customs, but also enjoying and preferring the diversity of experience gained from different others in the suburb. While their ambiguity was a resource at school, it became an obstacle when they arrived on campus, where their residence communities required them to be black in the most stereotypical sense of the racial hierarchy. In her historically white residence, Lerato was considered fully black, one of the first few students placed in the residence for racial integration, while Thabelo learned Sotho, the mother tongue of most of his fellow residents, in his residence, to fit in and 'sound black'.

Interestingly, however, it was this ambiguity, their 'coconut'-ability, which later enabled their counter-cultural leadership for change in the same way that Dawie and Aletta's established positions as leaders of traditional white, Afrikaans residences later enabled their leadership for reconciliation.

The different positionalities of gender also influenced the patterns of change in participant lives. Lerato and Aletta were less able to relate actual experiences or knowledge of racial incidents at school and on campus during the interviews for the study, and their life stories show similar patterns of sheltered home and school environments. Their lives reveal a gendered divergence in their naiveté. Both well loved by their teachers and fellow learners, Lerato and Aletta enjoyed a happy life at school, either 'snobbishly' competing for popularity among cliques of friends or diligently leading prayer groups. While differing as to their experiences as black or white in their residence, the trend continued for Lerato and Aletta on campus with, for instance, 'softer' versions of initiation, the intimate involvement of the matron in all aspects of residence life and the caring attentiveness of residence committee members ensuring a safe and protected environment.

As males, Dawie and Thabelo faced a very different reality to Aletta and Lerato. Their narratives reveal a constant struggle with violent masculinities at school and on campus, either surviving or resisting the powerful demands for conformity to the established patriarchy of their home communities and campus residences.

The severe abuses of initiation Dawie had faced at school as member of sports teams, and in his cancellation of initiation when he became captain of the cricket team, also later as chairperson of his campus residence, illustrate the pervasiveness of hazing as rite of passage at school and campus. Thabelo's naïve support of the initiation of his white, newly appointed executive committee members as an attempt to build shared values and unity, illustrates the normality of physical abuse as part of initiation rites. Designed to establish and sustain the powerful positions of senior students in residences, as in sports teams, the hazing of new students focused on group conformity, discouraging individuality and punishing resistance in a myriad of ways, for instance, having to look down when addressing a senior student or not being allowed to sit on a chair during house meetings. Since physical abuse was part of hazing among men, reprisal for resistance was a very real threat for Dawie and Thabelo, to such an extent that Dawie barely left his room during the first two months of campus life, and Thabelo spent most of his time off-campus for fear of senior students and hazing. These fears were well founded, since a first-year student of another residence had died in an accident during similar activities the previous year.

However, their struggle with violent masculinities prepared Thabelo and Dawie for change leadership, compelling masculinities different to the established codes of gender hierarchies and strengthening their resolve to resist male hegemonies taught in political and cultural traditions. They confronted political actors and redesigned programmes to mentor morally sound masculinity, for example in the context of for the Potency camp – the leadership development camp off-campus where black and white students could freely interact. The camp originally included only residence committee members and used military-styled adventure activities. Under Dawie's leadership first year students and student leaders of student associations joined the camp and the activities were replaced with activities for experiential learning. These shifts were possible due to changes taking place in the post-Reitz environment on campus.

The Reitz incident disrupted the campus myth that racial segregation offered a viable solution for peace, the argument that resolved violent conflicts among black and white students in previous attempts at racial integration on campus, through the negotiated settlement that allowed for racially separated residences. The failure of hierarchies of racial in- and out-groups to achieve change created the space for alternative ways of doing and being, namely to embrace the alternative positions of in-betweenness.

The disruption of established racial hierarchies and intentional work for reconciliation and racial togetherness in post-Reitz interventions provided for the third pattern of change in participant life narratives – a pattern of incidents that shows events and performances that interrupted established institutional cultures and required in-betweenness as foundation for change.

Embraced in-betweenness that leads change

The post-Reitz interventions represent that phase in the converging timelines of participant life narratives that interrupted the established racial hierarchies of school and campus, but also show an underlying continuity with the sociocultural contexts of these environments.

The patterns of reproduction and radicalisation of racial and gender hierarchies at school and on campus prior to Reitz established and maintained particular and traditional positionalities for participants in their sociocultural contexts, namely white and male privilege and black and female subordination. Institutional cultures, initiation ceremonies, wilful avoidance of discrimination and the normality of distances between in- and out-groups sustained the established racial hierarchies. The racial hierarchies of school and campus environments thus promised participants acceptance and belonging in their in-group as reward for conforming to its racial codes of social interaction.

Until confronted with specific racial incidents, the participants did not recognise the reality of their racial positionality in social hierarchies. Without realising it, they conformed to the normality of their positions of racial hierarchy, Thabelo and Lerato aware of racial incidents, but naively keeping silent about them, while Dawie and Aletta were aware of racism, but naively unmoved by it. Their success at school, their familiarity with social codes of their in-group and their friendship with members of their out-groups convinced all the study participants they were beyond issues of race. They also were prepared to speak out for and do the right thing, departing from the established codes of their school and residence cultures, which strengthened their confidence in disregarding (at school) or claiming race as framework (on campus).

However, their willingness to go against the social norms of racial in- and out-groups caused incidents and experiences of ambiguity, when the participants performed in alternative ways to their in-groups.

Thabelo and Lerato were known as ‘coconuts’ among their peers, while Dawie and Aletta were part of interracial faith ministries. Their ambiguity established a further positionality within the established racial hierarchies, namely in-between groups and often positioned in conflict with the established culture and codes of their environment. Through with differing intensity, all the participants came in conflict with the system at school and on campus, for example, in refusing to conform to racial politics, cancelling traditional initiation ceremonies, or debating race at home.

These incidents provided the participants with experiences of reprisal for in-betweenness and when leading for change – the precise types of experience required in the post-Reitz interventions for change. The participants were uncomfortable with their ambiguity and in-betweenness at school, disappointed when called a ‘coconut’ or choosing to remain silent when faced with clear incidents or racism. Race was an only an underlying reality at play in their lives. On campus, race was a present and dominant reality, causing participants to abandon ambiguity and adopt the racial framing of identity and politics in their residences. They increasingly doubted and tacitly rejected their earlier in-betweenness as a valuable position, reclaiming their ethnic identities and were ashamed when exposed for alternative lives.

Reitz interrupted this process of doubt and unlearning the ability to move between in- and out-groups, by casting doubt on established hierarchies.

The post-Reitz interventions focused on racial reconciliation as first step in racial integration in residences and transformation on campus. The iGubu project established dialogue forums that encouraged students to discover their shared and diverse stories. The new Rector introduced the Reitz reconciliation project and restorative justice in dealing with the students. The new leadership development programme focused on shared values and called for counter-cultural leadership among students. The project for integrated residence committees supported racial integration in student committees, while the university suspended the racialised system of student governance and, among other interventions, introduced a student forum to design inclusive representation for diverse constituencies. The interventions for change now demanded student leaders who were familiar with the challenges of leading in-between groups, rather than leaders adept at the established politics of racial contestation. The changes on campus embraced, rather than rejected in-betweenness.

The encounters that turn their perspectives on race in the participant narratives reveal a pattern of experiences of embrace – events that embraced ambiguity with racial in-groups and solidarity with racial out-groups. Thabelo experienced a first turn at the potency camp in intimate friendships with a senior white student leader and decided to challenge victimhood among his black peers. Dawie made a first return to change leadership in the uncompromising commitment and caring involvement of the new Rector and Dean. Aletta turned from doubting to supporting the programme for racial integration when she listened to the life stories of black student leaders at the student dialogue forums.

Lerato experienced a turn when her white residence immediately accepted and elected her as leader. These events reminded the participants of their earlier ability and courage to move between groups and do the right thing. The in-betweenness the study participants intuitively performed at school and avoided on campus, they now consciously appreciated and used to lead for change. However, while familiar with ambiguity and moving among in- and out-groups, the participants did not consciously engage with their in-betweenness as a position in the social hierarchies on campus until then.

The post-Reitz interventions required of student leaders to develop new ways of doing for the achievement of racial togetherness in residence and campus life, while the actual behaviours and social tools they were familiar with were those of the established cultures and racial hierarchies. The Residence Diversity Project motivated students to design new solutions in residences, declaring trust in their ability to do so, as was most vividly shown in Aletta's meeting with the Rector that led to agreement to allow students to integrate their committees racially as they saw fit.

Embraced and trusted to lead change, the participants worked with confidence towards reconciliation and new cultures in residences, also making mistakes that introduced the second turn in knowledge and identity in their life narratives, turns that strengthened in-betweenness as logic for change. For instance, following his experience of intimacy at the potency camp, Thabelo returned in full to a confident in-betweenness among black and white and challenged black victimhood and racial politics in his residence. Soon rejected by his political in-group and as coconut in his residence, Thabelo was not again elected as leader after his first term of office. Yet, as the change interventions on campus took effect, his residence elected him as chairperson and Thabelo introduced change initiatives to integrate the residence racially.

Interestingly Thabelo only focused on racial desegregation, continuing to use established residence traditions, such as initiation, to welcome new residence committee members. White and black students would achieve equal standing when all members underwent the same initiation, he believed. Thabelo was suspended for the initiation event, while black constituencies distanced themselves from him and white students supported him. In this major turn, Thabelo discovered that leading for change required a transformation of all aspects of residence culture for new values of inclusivity.

In-betweenness prepared him to lead for change, but new ways of leading were needed to construct new ways of togetherness – not only to reconcile black and white, but also to construct new sites and cultures beyond racial hierarchy.

Dawie also learned this lesson in leading for change. Inspired by the clear direction for change and nearness from the Rector and Dean, Dawie followed suit and introduced change in similar ways to his residence, focusing on dialogue, showing real care and measuring progress for change against inclusive values. He also led for change as organiser of the potency camp, redesigning the programme and its curriculum so that black and white students attended and skills to lead for change were the outcomes. However, while discussing the redesigned camp with the Dean, Dawie discovered that power hierarchies continued in the types of exercises and branding messages he had adopted for the camp.

Assuming all participants would be comfortable with the exercise, Dawie continued the adventure event to crawl through dark pits as a test of strength – a typical test of manhood in the established residence cultures of a male dominant hierarchy. Assuming also all participants would be comfortable with the association, Dawie wanted to print images of soldiers holding firearms on the t-shirts of the camp to indicate determination. In these incidents, he recognised the underlying continuation of the power hierarchies he wanted to disrupt and realised that leading for change required new ways of doing. Diverse voices together had to design a different way of togetherness that reflected values of inclusivity.

Aletta arrived at a similar awareness when she produced a video to honour the workers in her residence. Reflecting with the Dean on the underlying messages of the project, she became aware of the distances between students and workers. Leading for change required disrupting the deep structures of power in her residence, as on campus, an awareness that galvanised her leadership for change in student governance.

Leading for change in Lerato's life increasingly seemed to distance her from black students. Often publicly mocked and insulted by black peers for joining and then leading, but not disrupting a traditionally white residence, Lerato felt dissociated and rejected by her in-group. She experienced a turn in the inspirational work of a senior iGubu facilitator, also a black woman, and in her friendship with the black, female student who served as interim president of the SRC. Not only were they familiar with reprisals and offered her support to survive rejection by her in-group, but they confirmed that her in-betweenness did not replace her blackness – leading for change required far more than shifting positions in the established hierarchies of race. She was part of a new group of black and white students who led for reconciliation, inclusivity and diversity.

The pattern of incidents of 'embrace' in the life narratives reveals a third shift to follow the move from naiveté to change agency, namely the shift to 'bridge-building as praxis that seeks new ways of togetherness as alternative landscapes to the established hierarchies of race and gender. The study participants positively associated the notion of 'bridge-building' with their life experiences of in-betweenness and their change leadership on campus.

Bridge-building as framework

In his reflections on the concept, Thabelo appreciated its focus on inclusivity – bridge-building not only for race, but also for various categories of diversity. He reflected on the impact of reprisals, when bridgebuilders are stigmatised as traitors by their in-groups, as the reason that not more young people lead for change. As aspiration, Thabelo indicated his intention to find ways to encourage bridgebuilders to remain resilient in the face of acts of reprisal. Dawie most appreciated the counter-cultural role of bridgebuilders, but did not consider his life as such a leader as an exception to the rule among his peers. In his view, most young people of his generation wanted to bring black and white together and have the courage to interrupt established cultures of power. Mentoring students in leadership development initiatives to challenge established ways of thinking and doing now was his aspiration.

Aletta focused on authentic relationships in her reading of bridge-building as logic for change leadership – a bridge-builder has friends across divides without compromising her unique identity, courageously leading for change and remaining true to herself.

She warned that experiences of reprisals present a powerful threat to bridgebuilders – the loss of friends and the solitude of leading alone. Lerato defined bridge-building in a leader's celebration of diverse influences and her ability to inspire others to seek diversity as foundation in identity and knowledge. The patterns of change in racial knowledge and identity converge in and find an organising logic in the notion of "bridge-building" – engaging race from a position of "in-betweenness" in the social hierarchies of school and campus and leading change as a "third way" beyond the binaries of black and white.

10.3 Emerging themes

The iterative design of this study of racial knowledge and identity revealed converging patterns of experience in and among the life narratives of the participants, while simultaneously revealing divergences. The patterns so revealed allow the reader to explore crosscutting themes in the data – discovering and sorting subthemes into meaningful themes and then building hierarchies of themes into theoretical models (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Emerging themes indicate possible categories of meaning to make sense of the narrative data of the study. A synthesis of emerging themes represents a conceptual framework to develop and propose a theory of change grounded in the lived experience of students. See an outline of the emerging themes and its synthesis included below as Table 4. In both the analysis of patterns and the development of themes, I looked for reoccurring incidents and topics and similar networks of ideas that 'circle through' the interview transcripts (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

I draw primarily on the theoretical concepts of Freire, Bhabha, and Jansen from among those introduced in the theoretical framework of the study (Chapter 4), to name, categorise and synthesise the emerging themes from the interviews. Three groups of themes emerged from the data, namely themes of transition, in-betweenness and ignorance (see Table 4 below).

Themes of transition

The Freirean notions of "struggle", "transitivity", "conscientisation" and "praxis" emerged as converging subthemes to code and make sense of the student leaders' experiences of change – change as read in the narrative patterns of experience and patterns of change in knowledge and identity. By using the subthemes to analyse patterns of transition in the data, "transition" emerges as the first master theme and category of meaning for further development.

Table 4: Emerging themes

Coded incident	Subthemes	Master themes
Conflict in social relationships	Struggle	
Confusion with sense of self		
Differences of view and belief		Transition
Disruption of established ways	Transitivity	
Desegregation in schools		
Mobilities in families and communities		
Awareness of race and being different	Conscientisation	
Discovery of societal contracts		
Breaking free and gaining confidence		
Action to change social structure	Praxis	
Reflection on self and others beyond race		
Claiming bridge-building as knowledge and identity		
Awareness of alternative views and realities	Ambiguity	
Uncertainty with self and context		
Doubting self and justice for being different		
Distance from stereotypes of racial in-groups	Liminality	In-betweenness
Isolation from social networks		
Different perspectives for justice		
Meeting the racial other	Nearness	
Seeing the racial other		
Intimacy with the racial other		
Caring relationships beyond race	Embrace	
Restorative discipline when attempting change		
Affirmative trust by mentors		
Courage and preferred values for togetherness	Bridge-building	
Initiative for reconciliation and peace		
New ideas for institutional cultures		
Sheltered social environments	Naiveté	
Rewards for playing along		
Avoiding troublesome events		
Handling of memories of the past	Reticence	Ignorance
Family traumas and shame		
Social blindness		
Community norms and codes of distance	Reproduction	
Success at mimicking		
Knowingly repeating racial codes		
Traditions of initiation and seniority	Hierarchy	
Ethnic-cultural and religious arguments for distance		
Places of power to act within the system or not		
Myths of belonging and threats of isolation	Reprisal	
Pretences of support and trust		
Betrayals and embrace by in- and out-groups		

The theme of *struggle* (Freire, 1996, p. 26) refers to the process of people becoming critically aware of the political and cultural structures of their environments that determine the lives they lead, and take action to transform their consciousness and environments – what Freire calls the struggle for humanisation in the face of dehumanisation that take away human freedom. Taken as the broad framework to study the process of change in knowledge and identity, the data reveal the "struggle" with race as a common feature of life in post-apartheid South Africa. However, as the life narratives progress, the struggle with race and for freedom deepens, as shown in each of the student leaders' increasing critical awareness of racial hierarchies and growing agency to interrupt established ways of being and doing in changing environments. The student leaders' lives paint a picture of the struggle for humanisation against the established racial hierarchies of the past, still present in a transforming South Africa. They struggle for freedom from racial victimhood, anger, guilt and shame. In contrast, as they struggle for freedom from racial hierarchy, the traditional cultural-political structures of their families, home communities, peer groups, schools, churches and campus residences struggle to maintain the racial binaries of the past, though for very different reasons – to gain or maintain privilege and avoid traumatic or shameful memories. This is the struggle for citizen agency and democracy in a transitional society.

The theme of *transitivity* (Freire, 1996, p. 46) refers to the critical phase of social change when society announces and begins to move into a new historical moment – the transitional phase between the old and the new. In the transitional phase of change old and new ways of doing and being cohabit politico-cultural spaces, but with increased conflict and contradictions that encourage citizens to develop new political and cultural methods and tasks – a third way in-between and in conflict with the still-present racial binaries of the past.

The life narratives of the study are historically steeped in the transitional reality of South African society emerging from apartheid, as read in the repeated illustrations of struggle with a divided history and the demands of racial integration. At home, the student leaders' parents struggle with apartheid memory, while different mobilities appear in the lives of all the families. The schools that feature in this study appear as major sites of struggle where the demands of societal transition are visible in the various ways that these schools deal with racial integration and respond to dynamics such as 'white flight' – the phenomenon of whites moving out of urban areas to avoid growing numbers of blacks moving into the neighbourhood.

All sites where critical incidents take place, from home to school to church, reveal contexts in transition. The development of characters and narrative plots reflect continuous movements between the old and the new. The patterns of change in each of the student leaders' knowledge and identity are not rigid, but rather fluid and change continuously as they shift from naiveté to agency and in-betweenness to bridge-building. These shifts do not develop in an easy straight line as they move from one shift to the next, which Jansen (2016) highlights in his analysis of change in the lives of students on campus after Reitz. Although their lives show a progression over time from ignorance to new knowledge, the process is messy, a struggle of change marked by relapses back into naiveté and then successful shifts away from ignorance.

The theme of *conscientisation* (Freire, 1996, p. 83) refers to the critical awareness of situations and performances that limit people's freedom to reflect and act – the process of gaining a voice and confidence to resist the myths of freedom taught by the established racial hierarchies of their environments. The institutional cultures of their high schools discouraged critical thinking and conformed to the racial codes of the past, while campus residences in very explicit ways employed the old racial codes as foundation for knowledge and identity.

The post-Reitz interventions introduced dialogue as the first cultural action for critical awareness in the student leaders' lives. Although they rejected racism at school and opposed the dominance of racial hierarchy in residences on campus, they did not gain the required critical awareness to be able to lead change on campus. They only gained a critical awareness as the joined the post-Reitz interventions that intentionally exposed and challenged racial distances on campus.

Conscientisation refers to the transition of "in-betweenness" from an underlying and rejected notion of self, such as the shame associated with the pejorative label, 'coconut', to a preferred and consciously employed logic for knowledge and identity that could be associated with the label, 'bridge-builder'.

The theme of *praxis* refers to the particular agency of participants to behave differently to their peers and confront or change those aspects of life they consider unjust – to reflect and act on the world to change it (Freire, 1996, p. 34). Agency in their lives progresses from moments of overcoming personal trauma from a young age to agency that challenges decisions of leaders, established traditions or peer behaviours at school.

Depending on when they enter life on campus, the student leaders show different levels of awareness and thus of the ability to question the racial hierarchies present in campus residences, but not strongly enough to continue their earlier attempts at change agency intentionally.

However, their struggle for critical awareness and action reveals a growing agency in their lives, as read in their character transitions from naiveté to the cultural action of bridge-building. Whereas the participants show agency within the established hierarchies of their schools and campus residences, in the post-Reitz interventions they developed the praxis of reflecting on and acting with in-betweenness to foster reconciliation and change institutional cultures. Their agency matures as the 'praxis' of bridge-building as critical incidents drive the turns from reproduction to radicalisation to disruption of ignorance, and as their in-betweenness over time is compelled, deterred and embraced.

Themes of in-betweenness

I use the notion of "in-betweenness" as the second master theme to describe and make sense of four student leaders' lived experience of change in racial knowledge and identity. For Bhabha (1994, p. 35) "in-betweenness" is a political and cultural position beyond the binaries of opposite identities in established social hierarchies, such as race.

It is a sense of self that enables strategies for selfhood outside of the dialectic relationship between the centre and the margins of society. In-betweenness refers to a space for knowledge and identity distinct and separate from the logic of binaries that defines difference in opposite positions, such as black-white or male-female. It is an intervening space that is wholly different to, but connected with established cultural and political polarities. In-betweenness creates the possibility for and sense of newness that enters the familiar world of the "signal" and the "signifier" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 214). In-betweenness translates the patterns of experience in the lives of participants as coded in the subthemes of "ambiguity", "liminality", "nearness", "embrace" and "bridge-building".

The post-apartheid transformation of South Africa introduced new situations of interracial contact to the life narratives of the study participants, especially so at public schools that were required to reflect racial integration in the management of school.

As shown in their experiences, the schools the four student leaders attended adhered to the national policy of racial desegregation, enrolling black students, but the schools did not transform institutional cultures or interrupt the underlying racial hierarchies of these environments. However, the more diverse the racial profile of the high schools, this diversity increased the opportunities for interracial contact and friendship for the participants, leading to the experience of "ambiguity".

The theme of *ambiguity* (Bhabha, 1994, p. 59) refers to the experiences of uncertainty and confusion, when participants are confronted with their being different to or disagreeing with the established norms and racial codes of their families, peers and communities. As the participants met black and white neighbours in the suburbs, played sport and together represented their schools in cultural and religious associations, their lived experiences offered them new and alternative realities to the normality of racial distance in their communities. In new media-driven youth cultures, they discovered shared, cosmopolitan styles and images, while their local environments maintained the binary opposites of blackness and whiteness. Especially in the lives of the black participants, a sense of hybrid identity emerged. This was also the case for the white participants who, through their churches, moved into interracial spaces. The white students more specifically gained confidence to challenge traditional Afrikaans cultures, such as hazing and peer racism. However, this developing sense of cosmopolitan fluidity beyond the racial binaries of their environments caused them to doubt for their ethnic sense of self, leaving participants to question their membership of their in-groups – were they still black or Sotho or Afrikaans?

With few role models for in-betweenness in their lives, the experience of ambiguity left them feeling isolated when confronted with incidents of racism, questioning whether their concerns were valid. They rather avoided dealing with such conflicts, uncertain and hesitant to confront troublesome situations. In the process of racial radicalisation on campus, their doubts increased so that they would adopt racial codes more determinately, if not for the incidents that again turned them from distance to togetherness. Yet, in the post-Reitz interventions, the participants discovered and used their experiences of ambiguity as a resource to lead for change – their memories of otherness, of liminality, fuelling their courage and determination for counter-cultural leadership. Where ambiguity caused participants distress, the liminality it caused within the established hierarchies allowed them some distance from the structure to critique its parts and try new ways of acting.

The theme of *liminality* (Bhabha, 1994, p. 54) refers to the four student leaders' experiences and positionality at a distance from the centre of the racial norms of their environments – the experience of thinking and performing at the "margins" of the community or institutional culture. From a young age, they were aware of being and doing things differently to their peers, while at high school encountering events to establish a very real sense of not being "at the centre". Thabelo was named a coconut and pushed out of the Learner Council, Dawie cancelled hazing and was met with silence among his peers, Aletta reprimanded racist peers and became known as "progressive"- a scornful social label used in her cultural community to deter liberal or unconventional views. Lerato also faced this level of reprisal, often labelled as a coconut and side-lined from school councils and sport teams, with wealthier peers selected to represent the school.

Their confident sense of otherness conflicted with their sense of loyalty to their in-group. Their otherness was not a rejection of their racial and cultural identities, but rather a sense of knowing and acting for what was the right thing to do – they were not cultural renegades or dissidents, though their detractors considered them as such in some instances. Known as "coconuts" and "progressive", they were not completely pushed away, but also not fully embraced.

They sufficiently looked and acted the part as members of their in-groups and the racial hierarchy of their environments to achieve senior honours at school and on campus, but also were different enough not to be considered the same as everyone else. This left them vulnerable to rejection by their in-groups, allowed to remain part of the group for "doing the right thing", but simply pushed out when challenging the norms. They could, and in some instances did become the scapegoats when change disrupted established life at school and on campus.

This position in the "borderlands" of racial knowledge and identity enabled different perspectives and opportunities to attempt new ways of being and doing. In the post-Reitz interventions, the participants reframed their liminality not as a position in relation to the established hierarchy, but as a centre in itself – a third space where new designs of togetherness could be found. However, liminality became a permanent feature of their lives, often leaving them feeling isolated, fatigued and disconnected from their peers – a fragile position of critical awareness.

As “in-betweeners”, they struggled for a new community of in-betweenness that shared the liminality and fragility of leading change on campus, which they found at church and among other Primes (chairperson) also leading change. Liminality and ambiguity are intersecting experiences in the life narratives of students, with ambiguity resulting from a new context and liminality establishing a new space within the hierarchies for their in-betweenness. For this reason, I use “liminality” to name the combined impact of ambiguity and liminality in further analysis of the data.

The theme of *nearness* (Jansen, 2016, p. 134) refers to the resemblances and mutuality among black and white that the participants discover over time, as well as the process of transcending their distinct positionalities for a deeper, shared sense of humanity. The desegregation of their schools and social mobility of their families created new proximities and increased contact between black and white, though not disrupting the racial hierarchies of their broader communities. Sharing high school life and intimate friendships, the participants developed closeness across racial divides. On campus, their closeness became a strategic political tool to negotiate the codes and structures of power on campus.

It was only in the post-Reitz interventions, when the dialogue forums and revised leadership programmes ensured they discovered one another’s unique histories and their shared traumas from the past and the present that the participants found nearness. Whereas role models for a new kind of racial togetherness were largely absent at school and in campus life prior to Reitz, they found mentors in a new university manager and church leaders who embraced and worked for a new vision of being human – leaders who embraced their in-betweenness and galvanized change leadership.

The theme of *embrace* (Volf, 1996, p. 140) refers to the intentional effort for reconciliation and togetherness achieved among black and white following Reitz. Whereas the participants struggle with belonging in racial hierarchies at school and campus prior to Reitz, which they never fully achieved, they found new values of forgiveness, trust and solidarity between black and white in the post-Reitz interventions.

The new embrace between leaders and in the dialogue processes affirmed their histories and memories of trauma, recognised and engaged their ambiguities and invited their agency for reconciliation and change.

University leaders now reciprocated the students' support of the process with real consultation and trust, empowering students to lead change without compromising the values of inclusivity that make up its foundation. The process of change differed to previous cycles of transformation in two very particular ways, namely replacing "contracting" with "embrace" as change methodology and replacing change management with transformative pedagogy. Dialoguing for reconciliation and shared values replaced the established methods of negotiating and contracting with students about change, while co-authorship by university leaders and students replaced the established habits of instructing change – a move from the banking method (Freire, 1996, p. 53) to the inter-subjectivity of learning and leading together.

The theme of *bridge-building* refers to the intentional work of participants to cross racial divides, their efforts to reframe their ambiguous in-betweenness as a new landscape of togetherness beyond race and their agency to construct new institutional structures and cultures to serve a transformed campus – a praxis to transform distance to nearness (Jansen, 2016, p. 69). Where "in-betweenness" describes the new proximities that participants gravitated towards in a transforming society, "bridge-building" describes a conscious choice for in-betweenness as preferred logic for leading.

The concept describes the student leaders' initiatives to reflect on and build new social, political and cultural spaces that reflect transformed race relations beyond binaries, grounded in reconciliation as aspiration in leading change. A central question for participants in leading change was to "do the right thing" and not repeat the racial distance of the apartheid past, which reveals an ethical consciousness as a critical part of bridge-building. As the participants increasingly discover racial hierarchies and their in-betweenness as positionality in these hierarchies, they announce a different world and act on the established hierarchies to create a new world of racial togetherness – bridge-building as Freirean praxis of reflection and action. These shifts are most evident in the turn events in the participant narratives, where participants firstly reclaim self-authorship in the face of the racial hierarchy of campus life and secondly develop co-authorship to lead for change.

The black students embraced "forgiveness" – not to live with hate – and the white students "accountability" – to correct white injustice – as their respective drivers to shift private agency to public bridge-building. Thabelo rediscovered the value of his unique story at the potency camp and thereafter challenged victimhood among his peers.

The trauma experienced from the initiation disrupted his naiveté of independent authorship – the leader that "knows all", so that he returned to campus aspiring to develop student leaders in partnerships with peers. Dawie also learned this lesson for co-authorship when he discovered an underlying complicity with power hierarchies in the adventure activities and t-shirts of the potency camp.

Prior to this turn, Dawie first regained trust in transformation on campus when interacting with new university leadership, which motivated him to use dialogic and caring styles of leading in his residence. Aletta discovered the traumas of apartheid in the life stories of fellow leaders at the iGubu dialogues and replaced her initial concerns with the post-Reitz interventions with a full commitment to change. She assumed co-authorship of change after the Rector had declared his trust in the Primes (chairpersons of residence committees) to achieve the racial integration of residence committees. Lerato recovered her self-authorship after an experience of acceptance when she was elected as member of her residence netball team and community service committees. While leading as chairperson, she depended on the partnerships with black and white students to continue the change process in the residence and on campus.

The co-authorship of change reflected in bridge-building did not result from a contractual agreement of peer leaders to build peace among black and white, or with the university management. Rather, this co-authorship developed from a new and growing consensus that diverse students shared a sense of human interconnectedness that offers a fertile space and rich resources to design new futures. In the lives of the participants, bridge-building became the defining feature of a new landscape of meaning and interacting beyond racial binaries, which they co-authored with fellow bridgebuilders; a new counter culture of knowledge and identity and praxis of change leadership to challenge the cultures of ignorance that prevailed at home and on campus.

Themes of ignorance

More than the absence of knowledge, "ignorance" refers to particular knowledge regimes that selectively see and act on social reality to achieve strategic gains in an established racial hierarchy – an epistemology of ignorance that determines a silent social contract to misinterpret the world (Mills, 1997, p. 18).

The narratives reveal ignorance as intentionally cultivated ways of knowing and doing to manipulate their social environment and protect privilege or survive trauma. Participants learned and reproduced ignorance in their intimate relationships at home and at school, adopting across social environments and among their peers the codes of what was "normal" in the racial order in the wake of apartheid – their "knowledge in the blood" (Jansen, 2009a, p. 171) that young South Africans receive and employ as regime of truth in a societal racial contract.

The master theme of ignorance brings together the subthemes of "naiveté", "reticence", "reproduction", "hierarchy" and "reprisal". The theme of *naiveté* refers to the student leaders' innocent refusal to accept the reality of racism as an explanation for the incidents of racial bias they experienced or witnessed at school. Stunted in their awareness of the injustice of racism by its normality in their environments, they could – depending on their own position - either not believe their parents and peers would be racist or that racism continued in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Their success at school and their own attempts at challenging instances of unfairness among their peers supported their naïve readings of racial distance – how could their schools be racist or sexist when black and white learners did so well, or when one challenged it, but no one else thought something was wrong? However, the theme of naiveté develops differently in black and white life narratives. While all the participants were aware of instances of racial distance at school, the white participants showed less awareness and the black students showed intentional avoidance of racism. Thabelo and Lerato experienced the silent reality of black subordination at their white, Afrikaans schools, while Dawie and Aletta only became fully aware of and horrified at white privilege in the post-Reitz interventions on campus. Lerato learned avoidance as strategy at home and Thabelo adopted avoidance as measure of freedom from victimhood. Aletta's sheltered life, confident challenges to racism among her peers and cross-racial interaction at church had blinded her to racial distance, while Dawie was preoccupied by his struggle with traditional male violence and hazing of Afrikaans schools as a measure of his rejection of injustice.

However, the black and white participants in equal measure did not consider race a defining feature of their lives prior to campus – they knew racism existed as a normal part of life, but were never so directly confronted by crude incidents of discrimination as to become aware of and question the continuation of an apartheid-like distance between black and white.

Apartheid and its racial classifications belonged to a past never discussed or acknowledged in the lived realities of their homes, neighbourhoods and schools. Silence on racism permeated life prior to campus and sheltered their naiveté – a situation that was crudely disrupted on campus, where racial codes and classifications were openly used as tools for organising life. Here naiveté took a different form, namely in the argument for ethno-cultural difference as proxy for race – whiteness and blackness did not represent a racial classification for association, but a cultural one. In white residences, students adopted Afrikaans and Christian definitions of culture as institutional identity, while in black residences students, adopted black *Kasi* (township) cultures or disruptive political cultures as institutional identities. This distinction was naively not considered racist, but a reflection of cultural diversity and therefore socially acceptable as a logic for campus life. The reticence of university leaders and the broader community on these topics tacitly approved this naiveté and thus continued the reticence of families and high schools in earlier periods of the lives of the student leaders.

The theme of *reticence* refers to the wilful silence about past traumas of apartheid and continued struggles with race in post-apartheid South Africa revealed in the life narratives the study participants. Though instances of memories shared about the past appear across all the narratives, none of the four student leaders' families discussed apartheid or past traumas.

Moreover, they were aware of the apartheid history and its reality in the lives of their parents and families, but their parents did not share memories with their children in a meaningful way. The silence of black and white parents served the same goal, namely not to transfer to their children the traumas of the apartheid past, though for different reasons. Their parents did not want Thabelo and Lerato to carry the wounds of the past, while Dawie and Aletta's parents wanted them to avoid the guilt and shame of their apartheid complicity. The silence about the past continued at school, where the apartheid past and the everyday reality of racism were never discussed. The processes of racial desegregation in their schools were also not a topic for open debate, with no discussions with learners regarding policy or programmes relating to school integration – a reticence sustained in residence cultures on campus, where the only and loudest voices were those of senior students reproducing racial distance.

The theme of *reproduction* refers to the ways in which the performances of the participants and other the characters continue racial distance, either intentionally or not, across various sites and plots of struggle in their life narratives – their complicity in sustaining the racial hierarchies of the past in transitional contexts of post-apartheid South Africa.

While the reticence of their families and schools offered the participants a sheltered naiveté, which eased their interactions with racial others at their newly integrated schools, the absence of discussion on socio-political issues prevented their awareness of and critical engagement of social hierarchies at school and on campus. They learned the codes of racial in- and out-groups as well as how to negotiate the institutional cultures of their environments successfully. Recognised as leaders by their racial in- and out-groups, they were allowed to challenge those parts of their social environments they disagreed with, leading participants to consider themselves separate from the racism they still witnessed in their environments. The students successfully conformed to the politics and cultures of their in-groups, but also voiced differences in the hierarchies so that they continued within and did not disrupt the 'normal' ways of being and doing. Their lives were, to them, the evidence that the racism and sexism of apartheid were something of the past, not the present, so that they naively and unwittingly reproduced the racial binaries they did not support.

Their reproduction of racial hierarchy intensified on campus. The participants arrived on campus to find their residences continuing with the familiar methods employed at high school by means of power hierarchies to transfer in-group norms and codes to newcomers. They relived the cultural practices and projects for sameness particularly through initiation and group conformity, save for one difference, namely that the racial distance and segregation of established hierarchies that at school were hidden below the surface were now pronounced and publicly claimed as preferred template for campus life.

Under the guise of culture, racism was adopted as the norm and practised as the framework for student leadership in campus life – their naïve reproduction of race at school was now radicalised as active reproduction of segregation, even when the participants were left confused by this reality. In this space of aggravated distance, Thabelo adopted the anger of victimhood and Dawie continued the traditions of hazing they had rejected at school. Aletta and Lerato continued their assimilation and loyalty to the established Afrikaans, white and Christian institutional cultures that continued between school and campus residence.

The Reitz incident interrupted their slippage into racialised lives, while the post-Reitz interventions enabled a recovery of their in-betweenness and their leadership for change. However, their reproduction of race did not end as they stepped into leadership and developed as change leaders on campus.

In their initial attempts to lead change, the participants still used the cultural tools of the established power hierarchies, such as initiation, seniority and conformity to achieve change. Consequently, Thabelo initiated his new committee, Dawie used military images at potency camp, Aletta recorded video footage of the cleaners in the residence and Lerato called senior student "eminencies". Only when these performances were exposed as their complicity in and reproduction of hierarchies, were the participants able to shift and achieve a narrative turn to bridge-building.

The theme of *hierarchy* refers to the racial hierarchies of power and privilege in the social, political and cultural environments of the four student leaders' lives – in the case of this society, white privilege and black subordination. However, the social mobility of black families, desegregation of their schools and the sustained reticence of their families and schools pushed the established hierarchies to the background in the daily lives of the participants. Since they achieved well as leaders among their peers, the black participants rejected a racial reading of limitations they faced at school. Only when faced with severe rejection, such as Thabelo's loss of honours and Lerato falling out of contention, did they begin to consider racial reasoning as valid.

The white students remained unaware of their privileged positions in the Afrikaans cultures of their immediate environments and considered incidents of racism as individual, not institutional performances. Only when the post-Reitz interventions introduced them to the personal life stories of fellow black leaders and they discovered their complicity in reproducing racial cultures in the institution would they fully appreciate the need for new institutional cultures.

The racial hierarchies on campus were compounded by the power hierarchies of seniority in residence – a nuanced tool for self-reproduction of segregation well applied to sustain racial distance. Closely linked to first-year initiation, seniority among cohorts of students served as system of progression and recognition in residence cultures. All participants struggled with the powerful hierarchy of seniority, with Thabelo submitting to political seniors, and Dawie hiding in his room to avoid hazing; Aletta, excited to experience the fun of familiar initiation, and Lerato challenging a fellow first-year for not adhering to seniority rules at the tea can. The more senior, the more authority a student held, while gaining seniority only when submitting to initiation and adhering to the rules of silence that protected hazing.

The aspirations of students in residences were defined by seniority and attained in violence, which functioned equally strongly in white and black residences. As white students gained seniority by adhering to white, Afrikaans traditions of initiation and seniority; similarly, black students gained seniority by adhering to political cultures of disengagement and disruption.

Student governance legitimised the racial separation by proportionally representing black and white constituencies on senior student forums. Black and white leaders arrived in senior roles through racially separate, though similarly structured systems, to negotiate the racial agenda of their separated constituencies – a situation that all participants found disconcerting when they joined the portfolio committees of the SRC.

Read against this institutional culture of separate, but (supposedly) equal political access, the combined protest action by the residence committees against management was seen as a victory for racial togetherness – the best version of apartheid was succeeding on campus, when students from racially segregated residences could stand together against the management.

However, not only did the protest devolve into the destruction of campus property, but the Reitz incident exposed the myth of racial togetherness some, including Thabelo, at the time claimed for the action by the residence committees. Reitz unmasked the powerful combination of racial and cultural hierarchies that sustained racial distance and discrimination on campus.

The post-Reitz interventions disrupted established hierarchies by racially integrating residence committees, transforming student governance structures and renewing first-year welcoming programmes – the two arenas of reproduction of racial distance in residences, namely initiation and cultures of seniority. Initiation promised and offered members of an in-group ways to gain recognition and belonging, while the cultures of seniority promised access to privilege and power. However, initiation and seniority required collective and wilful silence, binding participants to rules of secrecy and threatening retribution to student not conforming to the norm. Such threats of revenge and experiences of liminality that follow challenges to the norms and codes of in-groups in the lives of participants introduce the theme of reprisal as instrumental to sustained racial hierarchies.

The theme of *reprisal* refers to the ways in which the established racial and cultural hierarchies pushed back against the threat of the student leaders' in-betweenness and bridge-building. Their narratives show the promise of belonging and recognition for conforming to the established norms and codes of institutional cultures, but also reveal an ever-present threat of retribution for deviating from or challenging tradition. Never publicly announced or openly effected, the threat of reprisal was a hidden, but powerfully present reality, as seen in how aware each of the student leaders were from a young age of danger how dangerous it was to be different – they knew and felt they were doing things different to the norm among their peers. Their lives show patterns of peers dissociating from them for not conforming to their in-group, being insultingly named a coconut or silently shunned in established peer networks.

Protest action by the residence committees that turned into the violent destruction of campus property by white and black students alike reveals that reprisals were an established and familiar tool to sustain racial hierarchy and prevent change. Students meted out retribution against management's intended programme for racial integration, drawing applause from students and staff alike for their racial alliance in doing so.

Acts of reprisal are shown to be strategic and collective behaviours that symbolically punish the offending individual or group to discourage counter-cultural agency among other members of the group.

Betrayal plays an important part in reprisals. The institutional cultures and their in-groups tolerated the four student leaders' in-betweenness and initial attempts at contesting parts of the established hierarchies of their environments. Only when the participants embarrassed or exposed the established cultures in very public ways did they face clear reprimands or retribution, which the participants experienced as deep betrayals – the same in-group that installed them to lead, isolate and reject them when they lead for change.

Most vividly, Thabelo faced several betrayals at school and on campus when breaking the mould – a scapegoat in the choir incident, traitor to his political party and fall guy of his residence committee following the initiation debacle. Dawie and Aletta faced isolation among their peers and doubt by their families when they moved to black residences. Lerato faced unending insults among black students for leading a white residence, even though publicly claimed as black champion by political role-players following her election to chairperson.

The betrayals show that the in-group support of their in-betweenness, which the participants perceived also as support for their change leadership, was only pretence. It was a way for the established hierarchies of their environments to posture progressive ideals, but not really be open to or engaging in deep change.

Victimhood was the dominant feature of knowledge and identity the power hierarchies wished to sustain by acts of reprisal. Revenge and retribution for attempting change traumatised bridgebuilders to such an extent that they not only withdrew from projects of change, but also considered themselves victims of the change process and then again adopted the prescribed norms and codes of their racial in-groups.

However, since the participants differed from their parents on issues of race and faced instances of alienation at school and among their peers from a young age, they were familiar with established cultures' pushback against ambiguity and change. They could remain courageous and continue to lead for change, resilient in the face of reprisal. In addition, as the participants faced reprisal for leading change, new communities of racial togetherness emerged and embraced them, such as fellow student leaders who shared their struggles for change and in their church communities, which attempted shared faith identities beyond race.

These developments reveal an unexpected role of "reprisal" in the struggle with race in the lives of participants.

Aimed at, and successfully deterring in-betweenness, acts of reprisal unintentionally also caused participants to gain experience at leading change – reprisal as an early training ground for their knowledge at bridge-building. However, for reprisal to become a resource in leading change, the four student leaders needed experiences that embrace their in-betweenness.

10.4 Thematic synthesis

I use successive cycles of synthesis to analyse the narrative data. A first synthesis of participant experiences across the interview transcripts established the narrative structure to organise and draft the life narratives as study data.

A second synthesis of the critical incidents for racial knowledge and identity across life narratives established the thematic structure of the data, which, combined with the first synthesis to reveal patterns of experiences and change in the lives of participants.

A third synthesis of the emerging themes coded across patterns of experience and change revealed three thematic groups as emerging categories of meaning across the data, as presented above in the master themes of transition, in-betweenness and ignorance.

A fourth synthesis completes the analysis of the data, namely to explore the conceptual structure among themes as framework to continue theorising campus change.

In this final synthesis, I explore the conceptual consensus and contradictions among the emerging themes and develop hypotheses on structure and process around such incidents (Zimmer, 2006, p. 312). Whereas the sub- and master themes of the study emerge from an analysis of repeated patterns of experiences in the narratives, the synthesis reveals the *relationship among the themes*, which allows the conceptual structure to emerge – a framework to construct, explain and develop a theory of change grounded in the life experience of participants (Zimmer, 2006, p. 313).

A synthesis of the emerging themes reveals four conceptual tensions to guide my development of theory. These include a *dialectic* tension between correlating themes, a tension of *underlying* and *surface* realities across themes, an increasing tension of in-betweenness as *positionality* in hierarchies and a tension between *knowing* and *being* – of epistemology and ontology in the lives of participants (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000, p. 228).

Correlating themes

Several subthemes correlate across thematic groups, such as correlations between "reprisal" and embrace", "hierarchy" and "nearness" and "reproduction" and "liminality". Thematic similarities and contradictions show *sustained dialectic* tensions among themes, but also reveal correlations among master themes. Therefore, for instance, the participants dialectically experienced both reprisal and embrace throughout their lives, with a clear distinction in the dialectic relationship between the two concepts prior to and during the post-Reitz interventions. Whereas the post-Reitz interventions in real terms embraced in-betweenness, the established hierarchies prior to the Reitz only pretended to embrace the students if they conformed to the in-group norms. In addition, the reprisals that followed the embrace during campus change were more severe than the reprisals the participants faced prior to Reitz – their critical awareness and praxis of bridge-building that followed the "embrace" worsened reprisal, rather than resolved it.

Hierarchies produce racial distance, which dialectically provide the need for and sites of nearness where counter-cultures grow. The reproduction of ignorance depends on the centrally defined norms and codes of racial in- and out-groups, which dialectically open spaces of liminality at the margins where new centres of group identity begin to grow, such as with in-betweenness.

In addition, a synthesis of master themes reveals a progression among the themes of transition and in-betweenness that combine over time to build an underlying epistemology as an alternative to and in conflict with dominant epistemologies of ignorance.

Underlying to surface

The dialectics among themes also reflect the tension of "*underlying*" and "*surface*" plots and incidents across narratives. The student leaders' experiences of race and change across timelines show an ever-present struggle with and the movement from latent (underlying) to manifest (surface) themes, such as the underlying awareness of being in-between at school, which evolved to a conscious theme of identity and knowledge on campus following Reitz. Thabelo and Lerato knew they were "coconuts", but were unaware that the label referred to their "in-betweenness" in the racial hierarchy of their schools. They discovered their underlying in-betweenness on campus and claimed it as "surface" identity.

Similarly, the underlying racial hierarchy at high school became the active codes of interaction on campus, which were disrupted in Reitz and intentionally countered in bridge-building. The four student leaders' underlying complicity with hierarchies of seniority surfaced in their initial attempts to lead change and galvanised their conscious praxis of bridge-building. Their underlying liminality in their racial in-groups was openly embraced in the post-Reitz interventions and established as a resource for bridge-building. The transition from latent to manifest realities followed incidents of conscientisation and of embrace, which enabled either critical awareness of complicity or trust in their own capability to lead change.

In-betweenness as hierarchy

The simultaneous development and progression of ignorance and in-betweenness as distinct realities in participant experience reveal *new positionalities* within established racial hierarchies. As they learned and reproduced ignorance in various ways, they also gained ambiguity and liminality when experiencing otherness and in-betweenness.

As black or white and female or male, the participants naively learned and reproduced their racial positionalities of privilege or subordination at school and on campus. However, unbeknown to them, their experience of ambiguity, reprisal and embrace constructed a hidden position within the established racial hierarchy, namely one of in-betweenness – a position alongside their membership of an in-group, which enabled them to act against hierarchy and produced the conflicting incidents of reprisal they faced.

In the life narratives, 'in-betweenness' becomes an actual political and cultural positionality within the established hierarchies of institutional (racial) culture on campus when the established positionalities of race are disrupted in the post-Reitz interventions. So for instance, as racially others met one another as peers in storytelling at the post-Reitz dialogue forums and the suspension of racially divisive student governance structures opened space for "in-betweeners" to lead, in-betweenness gained prominence as a political and cultural positionality with the hierarchies of institutional campus cultures.

As part of the post-Reitz interventions the student leaders' familiarity with in-betweenness positioned them as leaders in reconciliation; those leaders that 'understand both sides' and can 'bring people together'. However, as they actively lead for change through interventions that designed new methods and structures of racial togetherness, their roles as 'peacemakers' matured in roles as change leaders – the shift from naiveté to bridge-building, which revealed the political positionality of their knowledge and identities of in-betweenness.

Knowing and being (and doing)

The stories of struggle with ignorance and in-betweenness in the lives of the participants reveal a tension between racial "knowing" and "being" – the struggle for knowledge about race and racism in their worlds and the struggle to find and claim their place and a sense of self in relation to that world. Their struggle to *know* seems rather to be a struggle with not knowing, the struggle with the politics and cultures of silence, avoidance and myth (pretence) that mark an epistemology of ignorance. Ignorance transferred to the participants a sense of self, of being, defined by the racial binaries of either black or white and left them stranded at the margins as undefined or undesirable in-betweeners – coconuts or traitors. An epistemology (knowing) of ignorance established the ontology (being) of racial binary identity.

However, their experiences of mutuality and solidarity beyond race unique to their generation in a transitional society offered the participants instances of *being* different to their parents and established racial hierarchies at school, in their communities and on campus.

The reticence of their families, peers and environments prevented the participants from knowing and acting on their in-betweenness, while reprisals deterred them from claiming in-betweenness as a preferred sense of self – prior to Reitz they did not translate their being different to *knowing* differently.

However, in contrast to established cultures, the post-Reitz interventions embraced their in-betweenness as the preferred logic for leading change and as a resource for reconciliation. The new university leadership mentored the student leaders in counter-cultural agency and new ways to build racial togetherness. Their underlying knowledge of in-betweenness matured into the praxis of bridge-building as they co-authored a new campus community – revealing in their lived experience of leading change an *epistemology* to counter ignorance.

Not yet reflected in disciplinary literature on higher education change, I term this different way of knowing an "epistemology of transitionality". Their *being* differently (in-betweenness) engendered their *knowing* differently (transitionality), which evolved as their *doing* differently (bridge-building). Put in metatheoretical terms (Marrow and Torres, 2002, p. 31), their *ontology* of in-betweenness gave rise to an *epistemology* of transitionality, which were actualised in a *methodology* of bridge-building.

10.5 Emerging structure

The thematic analysis provided the "operational concepts" and the thematic synthesis the "frame" I use to construct an emerging theory of change. The analyses revealed a dialectic tension among the emerging themes that establish the essential conceptual structure of ignorance and transitionality as distinct logics of knowledge and identity – distinct epistemologies. The analysis revealed a process of continuous movements over time within and between the two epistemologies.

The themes of ignorance, naiveté, reticence, reproduction, hierarchy and reprisal combine to reveal the established and dominant epistemology of ignorance (see Figure 3 below) – what Steyn (2012, p. 21) refers to as the societal contract of ignorance of post-apartheid South Africa.

Prior to its disruption, ignorance matures in the lives of participants through a process of ignorance learned, reproduced and radicalised (see Figure 5 below).

The themes of in-betweenness, liminality, nearness, embrace and bridge-building combine to reveal the underlying and fragile epistemology of "transitionality" (see Figure 4 below) – a way to "know the world" (bridge-building) that develops from a way of "being in the world" (in-betweenness). Prior to its actualisation in bridge-building, transitionality matures in the lives of the student leaders through a process of transitionality compelled, deterred and embraced (see Figure 5 below).

The themes of struggle, transitivity, conscientisation and praxis combine to describe the process of change revealed in the student leaders' journeys with race, knowledge and identity. Most importantly, it is in the movement of transitionality from an underlying to actualised (on-the-surface) knowledge and identity that a coherent conceptual structure for the lived experiences of four student leaders of this study emerges (see Figure 5 below).

As the participants struggle with knowledge and identity, "ignorance" struggles to sustain its dominance and "transitionality" struggles to emerge – "struggle" remains a constant reality, even as a clear progression develops from naiveté to bridge-building. "Transitivity" defines the transitional nature of life in post-apartheid society as revealed in the dynamics of societal change at all narrative sites, with all characters and in all plots developing in the participant life stories. Transitions define the lifeworld of the participants.

"Conscientisation" describes two critical turns to awareness in participant lives, namely awareness of their complicity in racial hierarchy and of their in-betweenness as resource and logic for leading change. "Praxis" describes the critical awareness and action to lead change the participants gained as is reflected in bridge-building as praxis of transitionality.

As ignorance employed the *practices* of *reprisal* to reproduce its dominance, transitionality matured in the *praxis of bridge-building* to build new cultures of racial togetherness.

A shown in the graphic illustration below (Figure 5) the story of change emerges from the prominence of the two different ways of racial knowing, being and doing. Their new knowledge and identity of transitionality at first are only an underlying and repressed reality (green triangle), while ignorance dominated the landscape of their lived environment and experiences (red triangle).

Figure 3: Themes of ignorance

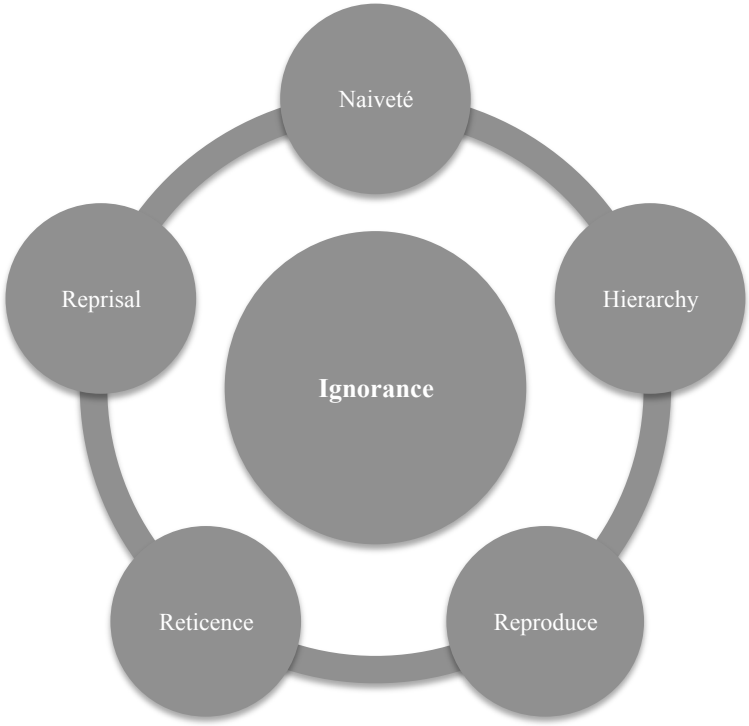
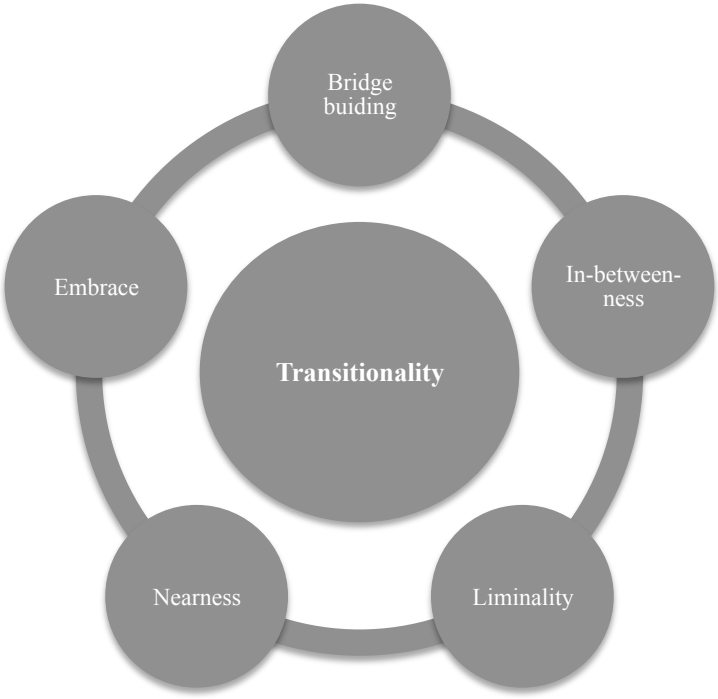


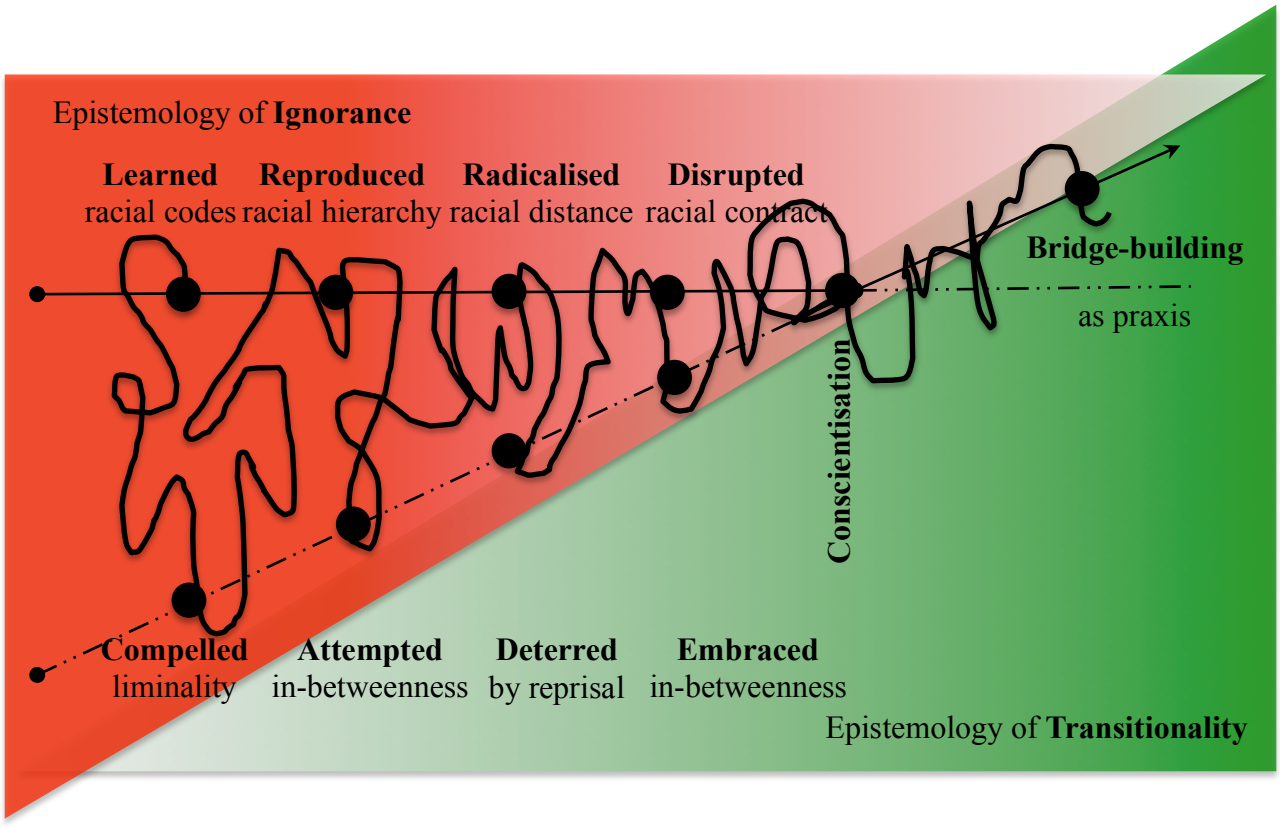
Figure 4: Themes of transitionality



The defining experiences of ignorance and transitions are all present throughout their lives (black dots) – they learn and reproduce racial codes at the same time as they discover and experience in-betweenness.

They continuously move between the experiences of ignorance and transitionality, but not in a straight line progressing from one to the next moment. It is a messy process (*scribbled line*) marked continuously and often simultaneously by relapses and achievements, oscillating between fearful naiveté and courageous initiative.

Figure 5: Conceptual structure and processes of change



However, as their lives progress an increasing intensity of experiences emerges that show progression from naiveté to critical awareness, and then a conscious engagement of in-betweenness as foundation and strength in leading change (*straight lines become dotted lines as transitionality moves upward from below, and ignorance dissipates following conscientisation*).

Though the process remains messy, and they continue to struggle with both ignorance and transitionality, their experiences progress toward an actualised identity and praxis of bridge-building.

10.6 Conclusion

Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato arrived on campus in successive years, from 2006-2009 and in unique ways stepped into leadership roles prior to and following the Reitz incident. However, together they formed part of a group of student leaders that counter-intuitively lead for change and became co-authors of the post-Reitz interventions in residences and on campus.

Their experiences of the change events gave voice to the experiences of students in the process of their campus transforming an institutional culture of racial distance to a community of racial togetherness.

By reading the interview transcripts with the aim in the first instance to construct their recollections as narrative data for analysis, I discovered similar timelines, sites, characters and plots of struggle in the student leaders' lives (Table 3 above). These patterns revealed a first finding of the study, namely a convergence of experience over time in the lives of four different students that all lead for change in the face of reprisal on campus.

This finding hints at similar ways of knowing and being at play as the students during their lives progressed from racial ignorance to leading change – a finding that makes grounded perspectives of change possible.

As I have shown in this chapter, the narrative patterns of the student leaders' lives revealed patterns of change in race knowledge and identity, even while considering the diverging experience for race and gender among black and white, and female and male students. The similarities of experience of change among participants across timelines strengthen the plausibility of emerging perspectives and theorising. I "mined" the data presented in the patterns of experience and change by coding the critical incidents for thematic reoccurrences as well as constructed a map (Table 4 above) of master and sub-themes.

A synthesis of the emerging themes revealed the underlying conceptual structures among the themes and the processes of change in participant knowledge and identity (Figure 3, 4 and 5).

As a qualitative study in the phenomenological research tradition, the thematic analysis and synthesis represent the findings of the study, in addition to the life narratives drafted and included as dissertation chapters.

The ‘Stories of Change’ and its analysis offer a *description* of the student leaders’ lived experience of race and change, which I use as method to explore potential new perspectives to make sense of and engage social realities. The detailed (co-) writing of the narratives and the several cycles of analysis ensure validity of my descriptions of and interpretation of their experiences.

For this reason, I present my continued theorising on the emerging themes as grounded perspectives and as research proposals for theoretical refinement of the study outcomes. In the next chapter, I will discuss the findings of the study, introduce emerging theories of change and knowledge as outcomes of the study and offer recommendations for continued research.

CHAPTER 11
DISCUSSION

All concepts, theories, general ideas are thin, meagre and ineffectual in the degree in which they are not reflective expressions of acts and events already embodied, achieved, in experience (Dewey, 2009 [1922], p. 2).

11.1 Findings: returning to the research questions

I engage the problem of change leadership in the context of continued racial discrimination on campuses in this research, which is foregrounded by the unusual situation of a group of student leaders that unexpectedly lead for reconciliation on a racially dived campus where racial togetherness was not the norm. Their leadership for racial togetherness was counter-intuitive to the prevailing racial distances between black and white students, following the Reitz incident at the University of the Free State. In this study I have aimed to make sense of this phenomenon and explore the notion that, similarly to the ways in which young people adopt racist prejudices during their formative years, these student leaders during their early lives also gained knowledge and identities to lead for reconciliation.

My research questions are: How did student leaders' experience of race, racial knowledge and identities change over time? How did their experiences of change on campus transform student leaders' racial knowledge and identities? In addition, I want to know: How did their experiences of race and change over time influence their leadership for racial reconciliation and change, and what patterns of change in knowledge and identity are noticeable across lives?

However, it is important to note that a phenomenological study at best remains one attempt at making sense of one particular phenomenon as reflected in one particular case that mirrors the phenomenon under investigation (Van Manen, 2014). As such, in a strict sense, the four biographies (Chapters 6-9) can be considered the actual findings of the study, since the detailed description of a phenomenon remains the primary focus of phenomenological work. Still, the purpose of detailed descriptions is to arrive at potential new ways to make sense of and to further investigate a phenomenon; in this case change leadership on racially divided campuses.

Therefore, in this chapter, although I begin with a brief outline of the student leaders' biographies, I report the outcomes of my analyses of the life narratives formally as the findings of the study. I then discuss and theorise about the findings to arrive at original perspectives on change leadership and consider possible implications for research, policy and practice.

Together, the biographies, findings, theorising and discussion of possible implications make up the overall outcomes of the research.

11.1.1 Stories of change: how did they experience and make sense of race?

The "stories of change" (Chapters 5–9) introduce us to the lived experiences of Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato, who all arrived at the university in successive years from 2006-2009, but concurrently served as elected leaders in residences and on campus. For various reasons, each participant gained prominence on campus for their attempts at leading change.

Black and Venda, Thabelo gained prominence when the video became public of his overseeing the initiation of newly appointed white committee members in his mostly black residence. The incident galvanised white opposition to change and embarrassed black stakeholders. Thabelo was suspended as chairperson of the residence. The event was significant, since Thabelo and his committee members (black and white) aimed to support racial integration by continuing with a practice banned on campus. The initiation was to be a shared experience that illustrated racial equality among and togetherness of the committee and so inspire racial unity in the residence – something all residences attempted in different ways at the time. Earlier, Thabelo was known as a promising candidate for black politics on campus, even arrested during the Reitz strikes, but later rejected by his comrades when leading for reconciliation, rather than racial distance. Thabelo's struggle with race was a struggle with anger, a journey from victimhood to change leadership.

White and Afrikaans, Dawie was a prominent leader on campus as coordinator of a prominent student leadership development initiative, the "Potency Camp". For years running, he was the heart and soul of the programme that students informally considered a prerequisite when running for office. The programme also was considered as the most important and for many years the only space in campus life where black and white could amicably interact and build friendships.

Dawie was also the chairperson of the oldest of the white, Afrikaans men's residences on campus, but the year thereafter counter-intuitively moved to a black residence that was considered a stronghold for black politics.

Later Dawie helped to establish a new, interracial men's day residence for commuter students. Dawie's struggle with race was a struggle with fear, a journey to overcome cultural traditions of violent masculinity and gain authority to lead change.

White and Afrikaans, Aletta became chairperson of her residence when it was still a very traditional white, Afrikaans residence, but gained prominence for leading campus-wide change in student governance, which was to follow her term as chairperson. During her term, she challenged the Vice-Chancellor and Dean of Students to trust students for leading change, leading to the administration's cancellation of their proposed post-Reitz intervention to appoint additional student leaders to integrate residence committees racially.

At the end of her term, she was elected Deputy Chair of the Campus Student Council. She also chaired the Broad Student Transformation Forum to design a new SRC constitution. She moved to a black woman's residence to assist with racial integration and the year thereafter helped to establish a new, racially integrated woman's day residence for commuter students. Aletta's struggle with race was a struggle with shame; a journey from naiveté to critical awareness and agency for change.

Black and Sesotho, Lerato arrived on campus in the first year after the post-Reitz interventions had been introduced in residences and as part of a first group of black students joining a traditionally white, Afrikaans residence. She gained prominence when she was elected within two years as the first black chairperson of her residence, at the time still considered a stronghold for white conservative politics. Publicly compared to Barack Obama, she was touted by black politics on campus as representative of their victory over white interests, while white residences claimed her election as evidence of their being 'post-racial'.

However, soon her black peers branded her a 'coconut', a race traitor because of her close association with white students. Lerato's struggle with race was a struggle with belonging, a journey from silence to gain a voice in leading change.

11.1.2 Analysis: what patterns of change in knowledge and identity emerge?

The stories of change of this study reveal both convergences and divergences in the patterns of experience and sense-making, as well as in the themes that emerge in and across the four student leaders' life stories. The analysis of patterns and themes revealed seven (7) study findings, namely: the similarity of their struggle with race; the impact of a transitional society; growing awareness of ignorance and in-betweenness; the role of reprisal in and the messiness of change; the hidden presence of new knowledge; and bridge-building as new identity.

Finding 1: Similar experiences of the struggle with race

The life narratives of the four student leaders of this study revealed divergences that are generally accepted as the rule for different racial and gender positionalities in social hierarchies in South African society. These are divergences of white privilege and black struggle; and of male violence and female vulnerability. However, the number of convergences that emerged in the analysis of the four life narratives was unexpected and overshadowed the divergences of race and gender. They struggled with similar conflicts within families regarding race, similar incidents of reprisal for not conforming to their racial in-groups, similar confusions and attempts at in-betweenness and similar failures and successes with change leadership on campus. The four life narratives also revealed converging patterns of change in race knowledge and identity expressed in the similar underlying experiences of reproduced distance that compelled ambiguity; radical ignorance that deterred in-betweenness; and embraced in-betweenness that led change.

These convergences together represent the first finding of the study, namely the similarity in the ways in which the student leaders experienced their struggle with race and racial knowledge and identity. Although the interviews revealed critical incidents unique to each life narrative, often, but not only illustrating racial and gender divergences, the four narratives revealed commonalities in racial experiences and life trajectories. As I reported in Chapter 10, the life narratives of the participants converge in temporality (timelines), sites of struggle, prominent characters and major plots – the patterns of experience that make up the similar narrative structure of their stories. In different ways and for different reasons, the four students gained racial knowledge as a means to survive troublesome situations of racism over the course of their lives – learning from "epistemologies of ignorance" at school and at home.

Thabelo and Lerato developed a naïve response to racial incidents, refusing to recognise racism as a way of surviving in the system. In other words, they made as if it did not happen. Dawie and Aletta, on the other hand, were unaware of racism or were indifferent to it as an expression of their privileged positions in the system. Nonetheless, all four students equally considered racism a 'normal' part of their communities and therefore often denied or considered impossible to change. This is so most likely because all the students grew up in rural towns containing strong farming and/or mining communities with conservative racial attitudes.

They attended similar schools that were traditionally white and Afrikaans and maintained the established cultures of their communities, but without clear racial threats. They also lived comfortable lives, for the most part sheltered from racist violence at home. Their lifeworld was safe enough and racial micro-aggressions so familiar that only major events of discrimination would feel 'abnormal'.

However, it was not only the 'normality' of the racial system in their communities that sustained the four students' ignorance at school. All four student leaders remained naïve, because they were successful at school, achieving well among their peers in the white, Afrikaans system. At primary and high school, they were popular, selected for sports teams or elected as leaders. They also had black and white friends with whom they played sport or joined in cultural or religious activities. They were familiar with black and white people and shared similar cosmopolitan styles. They considered their interracial friendships and cosmopolitan culture, as well as their recognition as leaders by black and white alike as evidence that they were not as racist or racial as the rest of their community. Their success within the system belied the reality of racial barriers.

The silence (reticence) in their families, schools and churches about daily racism and legacies of apartheid in their families and communities sustained all the student leaders' in their naïve sense of normality within the continuing racial hierarchy of their post-apartheid environment. Their parents would encourage the black students not to delve into the past and to make use of the opportunities they now had, not wanting to burden their children with the pain from the past, or would voice their past racial trauma by casting doubt on white teachers or pastors their children encountered at school and elsewhere. White student leaders' parents also avoided discussing history and, if at all, would share the 'good things' they did during apartheid, allowing them a more justified place in relation to the apartheid past.

Alternatively, they also would comment in derogatory ways on black teachers and their children's peers. In much the same way as at home, at school and in church, no attempts were made to discuss racism or history, illustrating a community-wide (black and white) wilful amnesia that enabled the students to survive and thrive by ignoring what they could see for themselves – the normality of racial distance and racism in their communities.

The gradual desegregation of their schools offered the participants positive racial contact different to their parents' prejudice and traumatic memory, without breaking the silence about racism and the past. Contact and silence combined to establish the myth that their success was evidence of a post-racial world wherein racism was the exception, not the rule. This is the "ignorance contract" (Steyn, 2012) at play in the struggle with race of a 'born-free' generation; a racial knowledge learned and reproduced at school by successfully conforming to institutional cultures. The student leaders were at the same time naïve about racism and silent about the past, but were also befriending black and white peers irrespective of racial distances, and attempting to challenge unfairness and racism in their in-group communities.

Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato were similar enough to not be rejected by their in-groups, but also different enough to what was normal at school for their racial in-groups to think of themselves not primarily in racial terms. They considered their racial identities merely incidental, and not definitive. However, the contract of racial ignorance of their home communities continued on campus, where race became an organising framework for life on campus. Racially segregated residences, classrooms, political organisations and the tacit support of the wider community, with its racially segregated social venues and churches in town, ensured the student leaders were radically (re-)racialised. Only with Reitz was the continuation of the racial contract from community to school and campus disrupted, and finally transcended through the post-Reitz change interventions.

Finding 2: Transitional realities that define the lives of the students

While the student leaders held different racial perspectives to their communities and families, they also behaved in a similar enough way to their peers to be accepted and to achieve well at school and in their communities. They conformed to and reproduced the racial ignorance of their environments, familiar with the social codes of their racial in-groups.

However, in a different way to the normal pattern in the wider community, the student leaders encountered people across the racial divide, building friendships with black and white and experiencing events that disrupted the established racial knowledge and hierarchies of their environments. Black learners joined traditionally white, Afrikaans music festivals; black athletes were selected for provincial teams in traditionally white sporting codes; and white learners were actively involved in black or interracial churches, amongst others. These encounters gave the students a critical perspective on their families and communities so that they would challenge traditional ways of doing at school or in their families, for example, opposing their parents' racial comments or challenging hazing at school.

Such experiences and their agency to challenge parts of the social codes of their communities set the participants up for disappointment, feeling betrayed when they were not selected for sports teams, not elected to leadership positions or shunned by their racial peers. Through these experiences, they became different from, and would clash with the established norms of their environments. They increasingly had to deal with ambiguity, often feeling in-between groups of their peers, equally comfortable with black and white and confident enough to challenge what was wrong around them. Their sense of in-betweenness was a result of the transitions that their schools and communities faced in post-apartheid South Africa – racial desegregation of public schools, public service and public space in all aspects of life became a lived reality for them, but not necessarily so for their teachers, pastors, coaches and parents. Transition marked their lifeworld more so than it did for their parents or teachers. As the students became leaders on campus during the process of change, what they did and who they were at school were embraced in the change process driven in the aftermath of the Reitz incident. Their 'in-betweenness' and ability to cross divides among black and white, which were considered strange at school and not initially welcomed on campus, now became their lived reality and identity in leading change on campus.

Finding 3: The discovery of ignorance and rediscovery of in-betweenness

The trauma of Reitz deepened the divide between black and white students, but also disrupted their ignorance regarding racism on campus – it pushed black students into a felt sense of victimhood and white students into anxiety and confusion, having to face the horror of white racism. The Reitz incident showed that what they learned in their residences as the normal and best way to live life, namely separated as black and white, was morally wrong, but also socially undesirable – a first discovery of critical awareness.

However, they had no idea what to do to change this and no leaders to show them the way. Rather, their leaders, who were elected because of their success in protecting and negotiating white or black interests in campus life, were only able to continue the conflict, offering little direction to resolve the conflict and cross divides. At this point, a new university senior management introduced the post-Reitz interventions for racial integration in residences.

A series of programmes aiming to foster dialogue created spaces for black and white students to interact, share life stories and talk through their traumas following the Reitz incident.

New leaders, such as the Rector and Dean of Students, started working at the university, challenging the established institutional cultures. Their leadership style was one of interaction and conversation, rather than top-down directives. They introduced reconciliation and transformation as priorities to replace tradition and conformity and in their own lives modelled what it meant to lead for togetherness and change.

Black and white students were placed in all residences, appointed in residence committees and together invited on tours and programmes that deal with history. The dominance of racially divisive political structures in student governance was halted, more opportunities created for diverse students to participate in decision-making and new student life programmes established to bring black and white students together. Now, new kinds of leaders were needed for the residences and the campus community. Residences needed student leaders who were familiar with the racial system, but could build friendships across the racial divide and had some knowhow to lead in an environment demanding rapid, deep change.

What Aletta, Thabelo, Dawie and Lerato had experienced at school, namely their ambiguity within established hierarchies, their comfort at reaching across racial barriers, their willingness to stand up for ‘what is right’ and their knowledge of reprisal, unexpectedly counted in their favour. These experiences in different ways, from a young age, represented a new, but underlying knowledge and identity for Aletta Thabelo, Dawie and Lerato, which I together term an underlying “transitionality”. Once a dilemma, now their school experiences of being ‘in-between’ became an asset and was embraced on campus – Thabelo elected as chairperson for getting things done; Aletta leading the Broad Student Transformation Forum;, Dawie chairing the Potency Camps; and Lerato elected as first black chairperson of a traditionally white residence.

As Reitz uncovered "ignorance" as knowledge of racial distance that demands conformity, the post-Reitz interventions revealed "transitionality" as knowledge of togetherness that leads change. Their memories of liminality and in-betweenness returned as strength in their agency for change, leading for reconciliation in various roles of leadership – the second discovery of critical awareness, namely of their privileged knowledge of in-betweenness and bridge-building. The emerging structure of themes (Figure 5, Chapter 10) locates the turn points of the student leaders' life histories at the intersecting theme of "conscientisation" – the point of "double discovery" where the separate trajectories of ignorance and transitionality meet. Reclaiming the confidence of their earlier in-betweenness, the students opted for bridge-building, actively leading change and adopting reconciliation as life aspiration. However, bridge-building came at a cost, as their environments still were uncomfortable with the ambiguity of their in-betweenness, as they were participating in 'normal' life as black or white, but also building bridges among or crossing between racial in- and out-groups.

Finding 4: The transformative tension of reprisal and embrace

The student leaders' experiences of in-betweenness while at school were not encouraged or supported, but rather frowned on or tacitly discouraged. They knew they were acting outside the racial norms and codes of the environment by stepping outside established norms among their peers and community, but did so because it was 'the right thing to do'.

At school, the four students became known among their peers for 'being different'; in the case of the white students for speaking out against unfairness, such as Dawie stopping hazing in his cricket team and Aletta challenging racist language among her friends. Thabelo and Lerato were considered 'coconuts' by black and white at primary and high school for their friendships with whites and their 'non-black' or 'non-Kasi' personal style and preferences. They faced reprisals by their peers and institutional cultures for standing up for what was right, mostly in the form of feeling distanced from their peers or unfairly judged by school authorities. However, standing up for what was right and then facing the consequences for doing so proved to them that they were not like the white or black racists in their environment – they had a higher moral grounding than the racist 'normality' of their communities, and could therefore survive reprisals at school. This changed when they moved to campus. Here they were expected to be black or white, powerfully initiated as first-years as members of either a white or black residence, living on a segregated campus with their classes, churches, student life events and off-campus social venues either white or black.

The ‘normality’ of the racial system that at school was present, but in the background, was an explicit way of life on campus, while everyone around them organised life around racial formulas, explaining all difficulties with racial arguments. Gone were opportunities to meet black or white friends, replaced by ways of doing that demanded they conform to established racial codes on campus. In student life, ‘reprisals’ became the backbone of social organisation, entrenching and protecting the established racial order in residences through seniority, tradition and initiation.

On arrival as first-year students on campus, Thabelo, Aletta, Dawie and Lerato had no choice but to participate in the informal first-year initiation programmes of the residences. Especially traumatic for the men, such as for Dawie who stayed in his room during his first month on campus for fear of senior students, but also for the women, initiation taught students conformity as a way of life – ultimate loyalty to the residence, its traditions and the system of privileged seniority.

Promising acceptance as full members of the group and future success if they supported and reproduced the institutional hierarchy and culture of the residence, their initiation very quickly taught the students that diversity, individuality and in-betweenness were unacceptable. Those that did not play along, in various ways were simply ‘worked out’ of a residence.

Based on racial identities under the guise of ethnicity and cultural heritage, residences co-opted new students through initiation and seniority to political campus agendas – black residences fighting for justice against white oppression, and white residences fighting threats to their cultural history and traditions. The underlying threats of violence (for the men) and isolation (for the woman) for not conforming to racially segregated cultures, ensured that first-year students adopted and reproduced the established codes of racial distance, which were enacted in experiences of scapegoating and betrayal.

Building bridges was not only unacceptable, but also undesirable – a preference prevailed for the familiar violence of racial distance rather than the unfamiliar struggle for newness. This meant that, in a more extreme way than at school, Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato dared not ‘step out of line’ and challenge things that confused them, for fear of violent reprisal, especially in the case of the men. Differently from the circumstances prevailing at school, avoidance was not a good way to survive on campus.

They needed to adopt racial ways of doing, thinking and relating to other people actively to survive and achieve success among their peers. Gone were allowances for 'coconuts' or for morally courageous leadership; reprisals for being different intensified on campus. On campus, being 'in-between' was intentionally deterred as much as it was unintentionally compelled at school. They were unaware of it, but reprisal for being different at school prepared the students to lead change in residences and on campus after Reitz. Still, their in-betweenness at school did little to encourage their initiative for change, even if it gave them a sense of 'doing the right thing'.

Rather, they were left with ambiguity, confused by the conflicting messages of being accepted or rejected by their environment, as was the case for Lerato, who became a favourite of her teachers and peers, but then was not selected for the first netball team or elected to the Learner Council. Especially in the case of the black students, they could not trust the 'embrace' of their environments, while the white students found ways of mediating the risks they faced for being different to their in-groups. Dawie avoided dealing with racial prejudice among teachers and Aletta hid her attempts at building friendships with black team members of her provincial netball team.

The ambiguity the student leaders engaged with at school disappeared on campus. Here social acceptance and recognition as part of a residence community depended on conforming to the established norms and codes of racial identity in their environment. Institutional hierarchies and culture promised to 'embrace' students if they behaved as black or white, as much as it threatened reprisal for not doing so. The student leaders' initial responses to the Reitz trauma illustrate how quickly and radically the students were racialized on campus. Thabelo was arrested for protesting in the aftermath and Lerato feared joining campus the year thereafter, while Aletta and Dawie thought it was that "not that bad", but similar to hazing at white schools and in sports teams – it was a vulgar version of what was then also 'normal' to them as white, Afrikaans youth.

However, Reitz exposed the promise of racial belonging (embrace) in campus cultures as false by revealing the inhumanity of the racial distance and power hierarchy of residence cultures to the students, as best shown in Aletta's horror at the humiliation of the older black women in the video, asking, "What if they were our grandmothers?"

Faced with the myth of ‘embrace’ in racially segregated in-groups taught by residence cultures at the time, their trust in the university and its leaders, including in student leaders such as the SRC, was destroyed. What would save them from the horror of their naiveté and participation in inhumane cultures they saw exposed in Reitz?

As the students became leaders in residences, the interventions for reconciliation and change on campus were introduced. Especially the initiatives to foster dialogue among black and white created opportunities for them to rediscover their experiences of ‘in-betweenness’ and standing up for what is right (moral courage) at school, but with one significant difference: now their abilities at being a bridge between black and white, at friendship irrespective of race, at moral courage, were not punished, but embraced in the process for change.

Differently to the (false) promise of a ‘future embrace’ that they could gain by conforming to the racial hierarchies of their environment, the post-Reitz change process offered a ‘real embrace’ of their in-betweenness, which they could gain by returning to their earlier familiarity with an ambiguity that disrupted racial hierarchy. Such experiences of ‘embrace’ encouraged their leadership for change and cultivated their in-betweenness as an identity of bridge-building. In their narratives, the students outline very specific experiences on campus during the change interventions that motivated their own shifts in thinking and doing – the turn events in their stories, such as Aletta’s meeting with the Rector and Dean of Students on the appointment of residence committee members.

“Taking their side,” the new Rector declared his trust in their leadership for change and their support for racial integration. His vote of confidence motived Aletta to lead for change, specifically because of its symbolic meaning of the transfer of ownership and responsibility for change and, for her, accountability to right the wrongs of the past – this was an encounter of ‘embrace’, which bolstered her agency as an author of change. This turn in Aletta’s narrative illustrates the finding that it was not so much the actual curriculum content of the interventions, as it was the affirming experience of university leaders that trusted them to design and to lead change, which gave the participants the sense that the university now embraced in-betweenness and transitionality, and considered them co-authors in the process of reconciliation and change. It was rather the symbolic coherence of new institutional values (such as making students co-authors, not objects of change) and the clear and uncompromising intent and nearness of university leaders that rekindled their trust in and confidence for change.

The uncompromising commitment to and coherence of leaders in leading reconciliation and change, witnessed in what the leaders did, how they did it and who they were, for students symbolised who they wanted to be as leaders and consequently galvanised their choice to lead for change. This intentionality of university leaders and the symbolic value their identity and performances as change leaders held for students helped the students to recover their fragile memories of 'in-betweenness' and mature as bridgebuilders in knowledge and identity. The finding reveals an intergenerational dynamic to bridge-building as theory. Bridgebuilders among new university leaders connected with students ready to learn bridge-building.

Similar lived experiences of transitionality, similar life stories of struggles for bridge-building and similar struggles with reprisal reveal 'privileged knowledge' shared between new campus leaders and study participants. As the students discovered role models in their struggle for bridge-building, so the campus leaders discovered knowledge and identities of bridge-building among students – an intergenerational continuation of knowledge for change.

However, the collaboration for change between campus leaders and students first required a moment of embrace, an experience to disrupt the prevailing ignorance that deterred in-betweenness and turn students to their underlying knowledge of a 'third space' for bridge-building. The students experienced the new embrace of the university in three particular ways, namely that their voices really counted in the change process; that university leaders were actually doing what they said they would; and that reconciliation (bridge-building) was possible and important to lead change.

Where the students were ignored by teachers at school or silenced by parents when schools engaged the process of desegregation and transition, they were actively engaged as co-authors of the change project on campus after Reitz. This signalled a shift in the relationship between the 'structure' and 'agents' from a top-down to collaborative approach; from students as objects to students as owners (subjects) of the process. This means that students and leaders were engaged collaboratively and intimately in the change process, visibly struggling with and overcoming the messiness of and reprisals for change. However, co-authoring did not imply consensus on all issues and it mattered to the students that university leaders effected changes as they committed to do after discussions. It mattered because students distrusted leaders for not keeping to commitments that served the best interests of the students. Thabelo, for instance, at first challenged the Rector publicly, but later so completely supported change that he turned to challenge racial politics in his residence.

In the last instance, these student leaders experienced ‘embrace’ in the restorative approach of reconciliation that became the yardstick for leadership on campus, as read in the context of Reitz with the reconciliation process between the four white boys and the black workers. Not compromising on dealing with wrongs, the university focused on relationships and teaching students to deal with the complexities, meaning and values that underlie the change process. This we see when Thabelo was suspended as chairperson for using traditional initiation (an act of ignorance and reprisal) to build unity among racially diverse committee members. Thabelo was embraced for his intention to support, but still held accountable for hazing. As Thabelo faced reprisal for seemingly embarrassing black political interests, university leaders faced reprisal for responding restoratively, not punitively (protecting white interests).

In the bridge-building of the post-Reitz interventions and the mentorship of university leaders as bridgebuilders on campus, Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato found their struggles of in-betweenness and their bridge-building, resonating, embraced and encouraged. What was pushed beneath the surface (latent) at school, following Reitz was pushed to the surface (manifest) to actualise an underlying transitionality as bridge-building.

Finding 5: Paradox and messiness as common theme

The similarities found across lives and indicated in the findings above reveal an unexpected outcome, namely that the lives of these student leaders do not match the easy distinction of racial opposites, of black and white, which normally is taken as the framework for making sense of racial hierarchies. Current policy positions on higher education transformation generally take black disadvantage and struggle against the legacy of oppression, and white privilege and struggle against a loss of political power, as normative perspectives to design change on campuses. There is much more going on in these four lives that counter these perspectives, with paradoxes emerging in and between their stories that questions the binary of race that determines current definitions and policy approaches to campus change.

These paradoxes already emerge in the Reitz incident. So, for instance, differently to the assumption made by scholars that study Reitz that the interactions between the white male students and the black female workers were angry or indifferent, the students and workers considered and described their relationships with each other as intimate and caring. The students were both the privileged residents, who were served by domestic workers, and the ‘submissive sons’, who the workers often disciplined as if they were ‘their mothers’.

As reported in my earlier review of the current literature on Reitz (Chapter 2), the incident was not only a clear case of racial violence, but also a case of violence in an intimate relationship of care – a paradox that illustrates that the easy binary of black and white, with distances and suspicion defining the struggle of race between them, does not provide complete answers to this incident. There was also closeness and trust between the students and the workers.

The experiences of the student leaders over the course of the lives show that such paradoxes and the messiness of change are the norm, rather than the exception in their struggle with racial knowledge and identity. All the students lived lives that continuously disrupted traditional notions of black and white as defined in the strict racial hierarchies of the apartheid past.

Thabelo and Lerato are at ease with and trace their history to typical black community life in rural and township communities. They are familiar with and continue to engage with ingroup behaviour and relationships, but they also make white friends, listen to white music and join typical white social events.

Different to their peers and their parents, they do not continue with the established black anger against whites, but hold different opinions on and argue about race with their parents and peers. At the same time they also learn to distrust whites and in different ways join black causes, especially prior to and during the Reitz incident. These paradoxes lead to their black peers reducing them to ‘coconuts’ – traitors to their ingroup.

Dawie and Aletta lives show similar contradictions with both achieving well in typical white environments. They gain leadership positions, are selected for sport teams and gain recognition in their white communities, but they also behave in unexpected ways at school and on campus, especially after Reitz. They become close friends with black peers, they spend time in black communities and challenge the established racial norms and codes of their communities at school and on campus. Over time they develop views on race different from their parents and in different ways engage them on race. They break away from the established cultures and traditions of their historically white residences and very intentionally participate in initiatives for reconciliation and change on campus, when their peer groups largely continue with racial agendas in campus politics and residential cultures. These paradoxes lead them to feel isolated and distanced from white friends and their ingroup.

However, the four biographies reveal that the student leaders' shifts from ignorance to critical awareness and then bridge-building did not develop in a straight line, with a clear movement from one phase to the next. Although my analysis revealed a progression over the course of their lives for ignorance and new knowledge, the process is a messy one, with each of the student leaders relapsing to naiveté, even when gaining new perspectives on race, and working for reconciliation even when struggling with racial anger or shame.

They oscillate between reproducing racial distance and embracing racial togetherness. So for instance, Thabelo and Dawie question the established racial structure and traditional cultures of their residences as they arrive on campus, but they participate in the violent protests at the time of the Reitz incident.

As leaders they fully support the university projects for diversity and change, but continue to use dysfunctional methods as they attempt to make change – Thabelo hazing the new white house committee members and Dawie addressing his white first year students separately from the black students.

The same dynamic emerges in Aletta and Lerato's biographies. At school Aletta challenge her peers on racist and class attitudes, but she remains afraid to openly question the racial dynamics in her hockey team following the selection of black players for the team. On campus Aletta leads change in her residence, but also produces a video that insensitively portrays the black workers of her residence.

Lerato rejects the racial attitudes of her black peers and school and on campus, but feels aggrieved at their rejection and longs for acceptance by the black senior students in her residence. She feels affirmed by her black peers claiming her election as chairperson of her white residence as a black victory, but refuses to participate in the black political organisations on campus. She rejects white racism on campus, but doe not disrupt the traditional residence culture.

This dynamic of continuously moving forward and backward show that change in racial knowledge and identity does not follow a clear pattern from one life stage or life event to the other, but rather reflects continuous struggle with race, even as the participants progress from naiveté toward transitional knowledge and then bridge-building.

Finding 6: An underlying new knowledge of transitionality

When Reitz and its wide denunciation exposed the entrenched racism of their environments, and their complicity in its violence, confusion set in about racial identity and hierarchy. The incident exposed the 'false embrace' that conforming to racial in-groups would offer them – it left a void of uncertainty. Nevertheless, that void made it possible for the student leaders to gain new perspectives and re-discover their earlier in-betweenness and familiarity with ambiguity as vital attributes for change leaders. The post-Reitz interventions revealed a 'real embrace' that applauded their in-betweenness and pulled their transitional knowledge – their transitionality – into campus programmes for change.

As indicated earlier, herein lies the 'double discovery' of conscientisation, namely exposing naiveté as complicit knowledge and revealing in-betweenness as new knowledge of togetherness and change. The synthesis of themes (Chapter 10) revealed the story of struggle between the knowledges of ignorance and transitionality. The synthesis showed dialectical (Au, 2007) correlations among themes associated with either ignorance or transitionality, such as for "embrace" (transitionality) and "reprisal" (ignorance), as well as a continuous movement between "underlying" and "on-the-surface" knowledge and identity.

Using the dialectic correlations among themes, I outlined two distinct categories of racial knowledge and identity (meaning) in the lives of participants, and used the emerging themes to describe each.

The themes of "naiveté", "reticence", "reproduction", "hierarchy" and "reprisal" combine to describe and confirm a present, and later disrupted, "epistemology of ignorance". The themes of "in-betweenness", "liminality", "nearness", "embrace" and "bridge-building" combine to describe and introduce a present, and later actualised, "epistemology of transitionality".

The dialectical divergence of the themes combines with the coherence among themes within a category of meaning, which together paint the picture of 'different and competing' types of knowledge; of ignorance and transitionality.

Protected by the racial contract of local communities at home and the institutional culture on campus, epistemologies of ignorance remained dominant, succeeding in the struggle to reproduce racial hierarchies and disrupt attempts at in-betweenness.

At the same time the student leaders' counter-intuitive performances of racial togetherness in this lifeworld of racial ignorance revealed the underlying struggle of transitionality to emerge as different epistemology – transitionality was present, but deterred and discouraged, pushed beneath the surface. As shown in Chapter 10, over time, ignorance developed in the processes of "learning", "reproducing", "radicalising" and "disruption", while transitionality developed in the processes of "compelled", "attempted", "deterred" and "embraced" action.

The disruption of ignorance and embrace of in-betweenness combine in "conscientisation" as the intersecting point of the distinct epistemologies (see Figure 5 in Chapter 10), following which ignorance as epistemology dissipates and transitionality becomes actualised as knowledge for "bridge-building".

Struggling against the pretences of belonging, threats of 'banishment' and betrayals that together construct "reprisal", transitionality matured in the lives of participants in the wake of leaving school. Transitionality became actualised as knowledge for bridge-building when Reitz exposes ignorance and the post-Reitz interventions embrace in-betweenness as a legitimate positionality of institutional politics and cultures. The continued reality of struggle, replete with conflict and trauma as transitionality, actualised as bridge-building, has implications for the scholarship of bridge-building.

Often closely associated with the notion of reconciliation as peace building and resolution of conflict, bridge-building in this study meets with conflict, trauma and division. However, admittedly, this conflict is not a continuation of racial war, but rather the conflict of a struggle against the hierarchy of racial binaries. Stepping outside the familiar conflict of racial binary between black and white students, the participants as bridgebuilders stepped into a conflict between ignorance and transitionality – the hidden struggle between conformity and change as foundation for knowledge and identity. Bridge-building followed the peace and togetherness of reconciliation achieved after Reitz, only to disrupt that peace in its quest for newness beyond racial hierarchy – an expression of newfound togetherness.

The reality of conflicting types of knowledge disrupts notions of bridge-building as peace building. Bridge-building adheres to theories of reconciliation insofar as it brings black and white students together beyond binaries, but departs from such notions of reconciliation that promise peaceful co-existence of in- and out-groups as outcome of change.

Peace in bridge-building is found beyond hierarchy and the struggle to disrupt it, not in the 'ceasefire' contracted among in- and out-groups within a continued social hierarchy. Here, bridge-building is shown to be more than the political tactics of change. It is primarily an expression of the being and knowing of in-betweenness – the transitionality as lifeworld and metatheory that underlie bridge-building as praxis of change. Transitionality translates the coherence of "being", "knowing" and "doing" in the lives of the students as bridgebuilders – a coherence of in-betweenness as identity, transitions as knowledge and building bridges as methodology to lead change.

The threefold scheme is significant as it suggests metatheoretical implications of ontology, epistemology and methodology as findings of the study.

Finding 7: Bridge-building as cornerstone of knowledge and identity

Definitions of 'in-betweenness' as logic for identity most often relate to cosmopolitanism or 'hybrid' identities (such as Bhabha's argument for postcolonial identity). However, in this study, the students were familiar with and held stereotypical racial or ethnic identities, not rejecting or distancing themselves from their in-groups.

Instead, they considered their 'in-betweenness' a separate identity that enabled them to cross and move among different groups – the third face of an identity of choice. Their 'transitionality' also is different for not presenting a temporary moment of identity that falls away as their narratives progress from school to campus, but rather over time maturing and actualising as conscious, established identity.

Across various scholarship disciplines the notion of transitions as merely passing phases between one moment and the next, the old and the new, is central to definitions of "transitionality". However, here the data show a sustained progression from an underlying transitionality at school that surfaced in bridge-building when embraced in the post-Reitz interventions for change. What lies in-between is shown in the findings to become a "destination" of identity, rather than a passing project of in- and out-groups or an unavoidable postcolonial cultural position. The participants gained some sense of transitionality in a post-Reitz lifeworld and named their experience for bridge-building only during the interviews of this study.

At school they did not consider themselves bridgebuilders, for instance strangely feeling embarrassed at challenging the system or upset when pejoratively called "coconuts" by their peers. Yet, unaware of it, with these experiences they were developing attitudes and knowhow, the privileged knowledge of the bridgebuilder, to cross boundaries and move between divided communities. Only when Reitz exposed the extent of their complicity with racial ignorance and the post-Reitz interventions embraced their earlier in-betweenness could they recover an earlier in-betweenness and shift from ignorance to "transitionality" as knowledge and identity.

The conceptual structure among themes (Figure 5, Chapter 10) that emerged from the data distinguishes between "in-betweenness" as master theme of social identity, "transitionality" as master theme of knowledge and "bridge-building" as master theme of change agency. The master themes make up the student leaders' being, knowing and doing that together reveal a theory of change and a metatheory of knowledge and identity.

'Bridge-building' describes the actualised knowledge and identity the participants employ following conscientisation, while 'in-betweenness' describes their lived experiences of liminality over time.

"Transitionality" describes the new knowledge that the student leaders' gain through their experiences of in-betweenness and reprisal, which they only engage with and employ to lead change after they have been embraced in the change process on campus. The structure shows that in-betweenness as ontology, transitionality as epistemology and bridge-building as a methodology of change leadership are not separate, but rather function as closely related nuances of the observable phenomena of bridge-building. The relatedness of the ontology, epistemology and methodology of in-betweenness, transitionality and bridge-building leadership, reveals a metatheoretical foundation for my definition of bridge-building as theory of change in this research.

In conclusion, what the findings of the study together and separately establish is the plot of a shared narrative of students leading change – the story of a Freirean struggle of "transitionals" to gain voice and agency for change at a divided campus and become bridgebuilders. Different to established perceptions that associate bridge-building with efforts to build peace for reconciliation in divided communities, it is a story of the conflicts and traumas that accompany bridgebuilders as they struggle for a new world of racial togetherness.

This is the story of an underlying transitionality, struggling to surface in the face of reprisal and finally emerging from moments of embrace as bridge-building, the praxis of leading for change on a divided campus.

11.2. Theorising the findings: returning to the framework of concepts

I delineated seven (7) concepts as a framework to analyse the life narratives of the four student leaders (See Figure 2, Chapter 4), as well as to reflect on and theorise the findings of the study. The concepts include the Freirean notion of the struggle of human becoming, which refers to the struggle of people and society to move from ignorance to critical awareness, which Freire defined as the process of conscientisation (Freire, 1996; Torres, 2007).

In the lives of the four student leaders of this study the struggle of human becoming emerges in their struggle with racial knowledge and identity. Through a messy process over time they gain conscientisation, which is a twofold process, namely gaining critical awareness of race, and becoming aware of their in-betweenness as new knowledge and identity that enables change leadership. Following conscientisation, ignorance dissipates and transitional knowledge and identity emerges as a framework to make sense of their world.

Social contact, the second concept of the framework, which refers to the contact between in-groups and out-groups (Allport, 1979), mediates the student leaders' shifts in knowledge and identity – contact between racial groups and with various role-players that cause relapses from and forward movements to racial togetherness. I use ignorance and transitionality as concepts to describe the underlying struggle of two different ways of knowing, being and doing that played out in the student leaders' stories of change.

Ignorance refers to racial knowledge and identity that maintains racial distances, intentionally employs naiveté as strategy to avoid critical awareness and ensures conformity to group norms through punishing non-conforming in-group members (Mills, 1997) – an epistemology of ignorance. In the lives of the student leaders the notion of scapegoating as a form of punishment to discourage alternative identities emerges as only one of a series of performances of reprisal (Girard, 1982). A paradox emerged in the life narratives, when it became clear that reprisal prompted new knowledge of what it means to be in-between groups, which later-on became a critical factor in change leadership; reprisal revealed transitionality as knowledge and identity.

I combined the psycho-developmental notion of transitionality as in-between space in human becoming, and the post-colonial notion of in-betweenness as third space of identity and meaning to describe the new knowledge and alternative identities that emerged in the student leaders' lives (Winnicott, 1971; Bhabha, 1994) – an epistemology of transitionality.

I used the notions of nearness and embrace as interpretative concepts to define the critical incidents in the student leaders' lives that strengthened new knowledge and identities of racial togetherness: namely experiences that invited alternative identities and encounters that disrupted distances. Nearness refers to the intimate proximity of the student leaders to members of racial out-groups, as well as to the mutuality of experiences across racial and gender hierarchies (Jansen, 2016). Embrace refers to acts of reaching out beyond the racial divide for reconciliation and change (Volf, 1996), which in the lives of the student leaders played out in their attempts to cross the racial divide at school and on campus.

I delineated bridge-building as the final interpretative concept to describe the type of actions the student leaders undertook to lead change, which refers to the praxis of reaching beyond current divides to build new solidarities (Boske, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). In the lives of the student leaders bridge-building emerged as a method of leading change, but also as a way to make sense of a new identity defined by in-betweenness.

The findings of the study employ the seven core concepts to describe the various patterns of experience and master themes that emerged from the analysis of the four life narratives in this research. However, the thematic analysis and synthesis developed the meaning and interpretative role of the concepts further by describing how they materialise in the lives of these student leaders, as well as to reveal an underlying conceptual structure between the concepts that describe and make sense of the student leaders' process of change (See Figure 5, Chapter 10).

It is this original account of how the concepts develop in and between the four life stories engaged in this study that suggests that the findings of the study may offer new theoretical perspectives to make sense of change and change leadership. Bridge-building, transitionality and reprisal emerged as the core concepts that offer original perspectives to theorise the findings of the study.

11.2.1 Bridge-building as theory of change

The racial knowledge and identities of students changed on campus as they recovered an earlier sense of self and others that countered racial distance, when new university leaders and the post-Reitz interventions embraced that earlier knowledge and identity. The students did not consciously gain the earlier knowledge and identity that made their change leadership on campus possible. They gained transitionality as knowledge through experiences of reprisal against naïve attempts at bridge-building in the transitional contexts of their high schools, families and local communities. Reprisals sustained established racial hierarchies by rewarding conformity and punishing nonconformity, which took a radical form in the racially segregated lifeworld of campus residences. Initiation and cultures of seniority offered the promise of belonging and the threat of isolation as a methodology of reprisal.

However, unbeknownst to the participants, reprisal also served as teacher, offering its victims knowledge of the practice of change, its traumas and its processes. The students initially internalised the traumas of reprisal and along with their peers adopted disparaging appraisals of their earlier lives in-between black and white, as coconuts, renegades or traitors. Ignorance and racial distance were unyielding realities, deterring in-betweenness and discouraging bridge-building – a reality disrupted in Reitz. The traumatic event exposed the horrors of racial hierarchy and their complicity in its continuation to the student leaders – they gained critical awareness of racism and its place in campus cultures.

However, the experience left them disheartened, aware of the need for bridge-building, but confused at the magnitude of the struggle to overcome established institutional cultures. It is this confusing moment of hopelessness at a time when critical awareness emerges, which presumably is a moment of liberation, of hope, that reveals messiness as a key aspect of bridge-building as theory of change. Messiness in bridge-building refers to this paradox of hopelessness in a hopeful moment, and to the paradox of the embrace, the liberation, of identities of in-betweenness in the moments of their oppression through reprisal, when in-betweenness generates capacity to lead change. In this way bridge-building as a theory refines messiness as a critical feature of change by highlighting the role of paradox in addition to the messiness brought on by recidivism in the lives of change leaders, which Jansen (2016) took as critical to nearness as change theory, and increasing conflict and contradictions Freire (1975) took as part of societal change through conscientisation.

In these moments of paradox, the post-Reitz interventions established a third space of dialogue with encounters to embrace the other. Students embraced one another for their shared and diverse stories, which awakened earlier memories of in-betweenness and attempts at bridge-building – the embrace of reconciliation in the aftermath of the violence of Reitz. New university leaders continued the embrace of the post-Reitz interventions, but intensified these to disrupt the cultures that sustained racial hierarchy and ignorance. Most notably these included the Reitz reconciliation process and the suspension of student governance structures. On campus, the experiences of in-betweenness and bridge-building that prior to Reitz were vilified now were pursued and nurtured as core substance of change leadership. The underlying transitionality that the students gained from reprisal in traumatic ways from a young age now became actualised as bridge-building, a conscious knowledge and identity to lead change. Without the embrace of that earlier knowledge and identity, bridge-building would not follow in their change leadership. What ignorance considers its highest success, namely to deter in-betweenness by reprisal, in these four lives proved to be its most notable failure, namely the knowledge of change reprisal unintentionally inculcates – the knowledge that becomes bridge-building when embraced in change.

The research findings then define bridge-building as a process of knowledge actualised for change leadership. Bridge-building is the visible performance of the knowledge and identity that underlies it – the surface reality of the epistemology of transitionality, as naiveté is the surface reality of the epistemology of ignorance.

Bridge-building as change methodology reveals itself as a process of translation and design. The ambiguity and liminality that accompanied the student leaders' in-betweenness at school and on campus required continuous translation of meaning between in- and out-groups. As they stepped into leadership, the students increasingly dealt with experiences of translating new ideas for understanding among their in-groups, or in conversations with their out-groups, even joining residences of an opposite racial majority as "translators for change". They offered embodied translations of the difficult notions of forgiveness and responsibility to their peers, moving from theory to practice. Their skill at translating the deep notions of change envisaged for a new campus community were closely connected with their ability to design new social infrastructure. The post-Reitz interventions allowed for and encouraged students to design new structures, cultures and programmes for residences and campus life.

The students took up the challenge, often making mistakes by repeating the methodologies of ignorance they learned and reproduced prior to Reitz, such as with initiation. The failures only strengthen their resolve and they continue to redesign their world to create their vision of racial togetherness. They became co-authors of the change project on campus and were resilient in the face of reprisals that followed in the wake of their initiatives for change.

However, in their change leadership we see a bridge-building that designs new spaces, practices and projects as distinct alternatives to the established spaces, practices and projects of the racial hierarchies and binaries of their environments – newness from and for a 'third space' of knowledge and identity. Their bridge-building does not seek a reversal of the established hierarchies or replacement of white with black faces, but a transformation of the underlying institutional structures and cultures. Their bridge-building is not a remix of the familiar to serve all constituencies, but a design of the new to express the value of togetherness in full. They design from in-between and aim to live beyond the racial hierarchies of their environments.

This study shows bridge-building as a methodology of struggle, not of peace – the messy, even though authentic, process of struggle. As transitionality struggled to surface against ignorance and reprisal, bridge-building as actualised knowledge and identity of change leadership engages with racial hierarchy to change it. As bridgebuilders the four students become scapegoats in the struggle for change, but recover from the trauma and return to continue the project and build new life worlds.

This they could do because of the new communities of racial togetherness they became part of, their church communities that taught forgiveness and reconciliation. In this context, spirituality plays an important part in the resilience of the bridgebuilder as change leader, providing a sense of calling, a vision of togetherness and a community of support.

In closing, bridge-building as a theory of change deals with the struggle of knowledge and its attendant traumas. Bridge-building struggles to emerge as an actualised knowledge of transitionality, which must survive the threats and reprisals of ignorance. When actualised, bridge-building must struggle to construct new spaces and projects of togetherness in-between the binaries of race, while remaining engaged with the racial knowledge and identities of distance it aims to disrupt.

As bridgebuilders deal with reprisal in gaining their voice and agency, so they must thereafter face reprisal when leading as authors of change – the never-ending storm of struggle between ignorance and transitionality. This study shows that bridgebuilders find themselves in the eye of that storm.

11.2.2 Transitionality as knowledge and identity

Transitionality, as I've termed it in this study, refers firstly to a way to know and name the world – an epistemology that over time finds its place in the interstices of the established epistemology of ignorance that defines the lifeworld of the study participants. As paradoxes, discontinuities and contradictions increase in the participants' lives as a result of cross-racial friendships and alternative racial encounters, cracks appear in the seemingly unyielding and impenetrable racial hierarchies of their lifeworlds – the spaces in which transitionality as knowledge and identity emerges and takes a stand to challenge the dominant ignorance of their environments.

However, as my data analyses progressed, the notion of transitionality also matured as the master theme that brings together the interrelated conceptual categories of in-betweenness as identity, transitionality as knowledge and bridge-building as practice of change leadership – a metatheoretical scheme of ontology, epistemology and methodology. This threefold scheme reveals in-betweenness as an ontological anchor as the students struggle with the forced racial binaries of established hierarchies. It reveals transitionality not as an innate epistemology, but as knowledge that establishes itself in hidden and unintentional ways and requires moments of embrace to surface – transitionality remains fractured unless embraced and actualised for change authorship. The metatheoretical perspective also reveals bridge-building not only as an extension of in-betweenness and transitionality, but also as an actualised methodology for being, knowing and doing change on campus.

This scheme refines Freire's notion of transitivity as the critical phase of social change when society begins to move into a new historical moment – the transitional phase between the old and the new (Costa, 2012; Freire, 1996). In the transitional phase of change old and new ways of doing and being cohabit politico-cultural spaces, but with increased conflict and contradictions that encourage citizens to develop new political and cultural methods and tasks – a third way in-between and in conflict with the still-present racial binaries of the past.

The distinction between latent (hidden or underlying) and manifest (surface-level) themes is central to the notion of transitionality as metatheory of change. In a lifeworld determined by ignorance and hierarchy, in-betweenness remains hidden or at best pejoratively known as undesirable position – coconuts and renegades are not welcome. Its cultural and political positionalities are real, but deterred and rejected prior to and during Reitz. In the post-Reitz interventions, in-betweenness becomes actualised as the political position of bridge-building in change leadership.

Similarly, prior to and during Reitz, transitionality remained latent, unknown and unstructured. Closely associating loss with their experiences of change leadership due to the traumas of reprisal, the participants were unaware of their privileged knowledge for change leadership.

Transitionality surfaced as the students discovered they were familiar with the challenges of change, embraced it and harnessed that experience for the praxis of bridge-building. As a methodology of change, while bridge-building resonates with performances of in-betweenness and engages transitionality, it always remains manifest – it is the actualised praxis of in-betweenness and transitionality at the surface of lived experience.

A limited temporality offers a second important notion central to transitionality as metatheory of change. As a descriptive concept, transitionality is often associated with passing temporalities, phases between two points in time and intermediate spaces. It describes the passing moments from where one departs from and where one is going. The metatheoretical development of transitionality in this study disrupts this definition.

Transitionality remains a constant reality in the lived experience of the study participants and over time, it progresses from a latent and fractured to coherent and actualised knowledge. In bridge-building, the participants claim in-betweenness and transitionality as core to their sense of self and their aspirations as leaders – transitionality becomes a ‘destination’, rather than a ‘halfway house’ en route to the opposite points of the racial binary.

The metatheory of transitionality provides a lens to make sense of the lifeworld and lived experience of Born-Free South Africans. Transitions define their lifeworld, such as in the desegregation of former white schools referenced in this study, which introduces experiences and encounters of the racially other vastly different to those of older generations.

A transitional society compels in-betweenness by establishing new proximities within established hierarchies. New positionalities construct new epistemologies, which remain hidden and latent unless actualised by an embrace to author change. In this way, the metatheory of transitionality reveals the important role of bridge-building as logic for transformative pedagogy – if pedagogy does not actualise in-betweenness and knowledge of transitionality as bridge-building, reprisal will sustain knowledge of ignorance.

11.2.3 Reprisal as performance

Reprisal features prominently in the theory of change developed in this study. In the thematic analysis of the life narratives, reprisal emerges as one of the themes of ignorance and in a dialectic tension with embrace as theme of transitionality.

As outlined above in the description of bridge-building as theory of change, reprisal and embrace together provide the main feature of this theory of change, each with a unique role. Reprisal causes experiences that provide its victims with new, but hidden knowledge to lead change. Embrace engages and nurtures that hidden knowledge that allows bridge-building to surface as actualised knowledge and identity. Thus, while embrace holds priority in my definition of a theory of change, reprisal as master theme emerged as an important field of experience for further analysis and theoretical develop – a project that lies beyond the purpose of this study. However, in view of further research that may follow this study, as well as to strengthen the argument made for bridge-building as theory of change I describe key features of reprisal as an additional theory emerging from the research.

I use the term ‘reprisal’ to describe incidents or performances of retaliation or revenge the study participants experience for not conforming, and behaving differently to the codes of their racial in-group or the norms of the established hierarchies (racially and otherwise) of their environments. It is a performance of ignorance, as embrace is a performance of bridge-building; of transitionality.

Its purpose is to maintain conformity, hierarchy and distance and discourage difference, individuality and nearness – it is the main tactic of ignorance in its struggle to remain dominant against transitionality; a task it ultimately fails through the embrace of post-Reitz interventions. Members of an in-group (such as white students) face reprisal when they make friends with or ally with members of an out-group (such as black students).

They face reprisal when they support a policy resisted by members of an in-group for contesting established norms and codes of that group (such as a policy against hazing) or that creates closer ties with members of an out-group (such as a policy for racial integration). Reprisal emerges equally across all in-groups in a racial binary, with black students acting against the black student leaders in this study who forge ties with white students or who challenge the established norms and codes of blackness (such as political affiliation).

Acts of reprisal range from non-violent actions such as snubbing or ignoring to direct attacks – verbal or physical – against the person moving outside his or her in-group, or challenging its established norms. Reprisals respond to counter-cultural behaviours of in-group members that claim a morally sound motivation for their culturally disruptive behaviour. The group knows its cause in defence of reprisal is not just and for that reason, remains unable to punish their members openly, leading to methods of punishment not codified in formal policies. For this reason, reprisals for the most part seem to find public expression as covert acts perpetrated by a collective of the in-group, such as a sports team that shuns a member or in formalised institutional processes, such as a selection process that unexpectedly excludes a strong candidate in election of a student council.

This theory of reprisal further develops Girard's theory of scapegoating (1982) in the context of bridge-building as theory of change, by explaining the knowledge implications of the ritual sacrifice and symbolic violence visible in the life narratives of the students. Reprisal also refines Girard's description of the particular performances and cultural projects of scapegoating.

This research shows that the student leaders gained the capacity for change leadership from experiences of reprisal – gains of alternative knowledge and identities, which may be inferred from scapegoating and victimhood theories. Reprisal emerges not only as 'the perpetrator', but also as 'the teacher' who transfers a privileged knowledge on the nature and demands of change in transitional contexts to its victims. It induces an alternative epistemology as foundation for change leadership.

As scapegoating works with notions of reciprocity and rivalry, reprisal employs 'sameness' as standard to determine deviating behaviours of in-group members, and then punishing 'difference'; sameness as a measure of security against instability.

Girard (1982) shows that social groups maintain stability with group performances of victimisation, selecting a scapegoat to sacrifice as counter-measure for the perceived threat of instability. It sacrifices the scapegoat in a public process of symbolic violence through humiliation, exile and death and then defends its action by pointing at a renewed sense of balance and harmony that returns to the group. This also is the purpose of reprisal and how it defends its practices to maintain sameness. The life narratives of this study reveal a series of practices or 'projects' of ever-increasing intensity that reprisal enacts to achieve its purpose, namely projects of promise, pretence, threat, betrayal, scapegoating, isolation and exile.

'Promise' refers to the promise of belonging that conformity to the established codes of an in-group and the norms of racial hierarchy offer. However, both the 'promise' and the 'belonging' are part of the myth of acceptance and recognition. A myth, since the centre of the definition of the ideal type of the group continuously shifts as new seniors reinterpret its meaning and aim to outdo previous generations. The promise of belonging of reprisal contrasts with the actual belonging brought about by embrace.

This is illustrated in Lerato's life story that involved living with a sense of belonging at school, that was then disrupted when she was unexpectedly not selected for senior teams and leadership in her final year, but re-established when, as a first-year student the following year, she was included in teams of her campus residence.

'Pretence' refers to the false sense of support the bridgebuilders experience from institutional cultures and social networks when they deviate from or challenge aspects of the established codes and norms of racial hierarchy. This is false, since the bridgebuilders discover the reality of the unyielding set of different values only later when their different behaviours become prominent enough for the system to respond overtly. Initially, the established hierarchies do not act against their in-betweenness, allowing them to become leaders. They believe that in actual fact the system they function in shares their values of togetherness, but it only keeps 'doing things as always was the case' – generating the pretence that their knowledge and identity are well supported. Reprisal is 'the trickster', leading bridgebuilders to believe their attempts carry support, while only setting them up for the disappointment of betrayal.

This is illustrated in Dawie's life story, in which he directly challenged hazing in his cricket team at school and as chairperson of his campus residence, only to discover later in both cases a return of those practices as soon as his term of office ended.

‘Threat’ refers to the ever-present awareness of members of in- and out-groups that reprisal will follow attempts at breaking the mould. Threats combine with the promise of belonging to provide the motivation that ensures almost without fail that members of in-groups comply with inhumane traditions of initiation, seniority and silence. The power of threat lies in its unspoken nature. There is not a publicly declared threat, but people ‘know’ the danger of stepping out of line, and consequently regulate their behaviours with the perceived threat of reprisal. However, this internalised mechanism of reprisal is not unfounded, since over time everyone in the hierarchy and across groups witnessed some act of revenge perpetrated against another or participated in activities that justify reprisal, such as initiation. Reprisal threatens with the traumas of betrayal, scapegoating, isolation and exile. This is illustrated in Lerato’s life story in which she faced threats from her black peers in her residence and on campus for her willingness to and success at leading a white residence.

‘Betrayal’ refers to the responses of in-groups that withdraw their support when bridgebuilders assume an implied, reciprocal and secure loyalty. Betrayal is not a planned action taken by the group, but emerges when public crises develop in the course of change. Closely linked to the role of pretence in reprisal, betrayal functions with the assumptions of shared values and codes that bridgebuilders hold and transfer to their in-groups – since the group initially accepts their initiatives for change, the bridgebuilders also assume a loyalty to values of inclusion and a commitment to change. Different from threat, betrayal functions only with an outside locale of control. The fellow group members on whom the bridgebuilder facing difficulty in the change process depends the most, disappear in a crisis and offer no support for fear of too close an association with the change leader in the public eye. This is illustrated in Thabelo’s life story when his black peers withdraw from him in the wake of the initiation debacle, while his white peers offered him support, leading him to distrust the authenticity of his in-group’s commitment to change. This experience also illustrates the project of scapegoating in reprisal.

‘Scapegoating’ refers to the blame assigned to one member of a group to serve as substitute for the punishment the group considers justified, while the actual innocence or guilt of the scapegoat matters little. As soon as the bridgebuilder gains prominence either for a successful or failed attempt at change, the angers and traumas of others are transferred to the public image of the bridgebuilder, who then faces victimization and expulsion. Scapegoating stigmatises the victim as the untouchable of the group and the broader social hierarchy.

As Thabelo takes responsibility for the initiation of new committee members, he finds close allies, such as his residence head and the seniors of his political party, distancing them from him for betraying the cause of transformation, a view that could not be further from the truth.

'Isolation' refers to the experience of silence that the change leader meets following their initiative for change. Contact in established social networks declines, friends seem distanced and engagement with the bridgebuilder outside to the projects for change they direct all but stops. The leader feels isolated, disconnected from established networks, while also not fully accepted in new networks considered by their in-groups as representing the out-group. This project of reprisal pushes the change leader to seek new communities of belonging, which all the participants in this study found in their faith communities. We see this reality illustrated in the experiences of Dawie en Aletta who felt distanced from their in-group friends following their move to black residences, even though all supported their initiative. However, rather than illustrating that faith communities in themselves offer a solution to the isolation of the bridgebuilder, this experience in these student leaders' lives reveal that a community that intentionally organises itself around new values of alternative identities is critical to sustain bridge-building leaders.

'Exile' completes the projects of reprisal and refers to the initiative of the in-group or the hierarchy to exclude the bridgebuilder actively from all groups, sites and narrative plots of the environment – a symbolic death. Freire (2007, p. 67) defines this experience as one of 'borrowed context'. When peace returns to the situation following the exile of the change leader, the hierarchy and groups therein justify for themselves the need for and action taken to exile one of its members as scapegoat. This is best illustrated in Thabelo's departure from campus and withdrawal from the post-Reitz interventions following the initiation trauma with new committee members. His return to campus as part of the Potency programme was in his experience a 'rebirth'.

In closing, reprisal plays a major part in pushing those that differ from the group out to its margins. Together its projects construct a seemingly impenetrable methodology to sustain established hierarchies and racial binaries. However, it is exactly at the margins of the binary opposites of race that victims of reprisal enter the interstitial spaces of in-betweenness, gain the privileged knowledge of transitionality and further progress towards knowledge and identity of bridge-building. Unintentionally, reprisal becomes a teacher for change.

11.3 Implications of the findings: returning to the literature

My review of literature relevant to the combined themes of this study of knowledge and identity, student leaders and racial reconciliation revealed a number of silences in current scholarship on change leadership in higher education, most notably regarding the role of student leaders as authors of campus change – a silence also present in scholarship on Reitz.

The international literature on student leadership focused on student development for socially responsible leadership, while the South African literature describes the performativity and conceptual framing of student governance, although a recent and growing body of work on the recent student movements in the country begin to explore new lines of inquiry. Very few studies explore the role of students as co-drivers of institutional change, describe student leaders' experiences in leading change or theorise change from student leaders' perspective. These silences also appear in scholarship on Reitz, which focus on students' personal experiences of change or on groups' racial behaviours, but do not consider students as designers of transformation. As is the case for scholarship on student leaders and change broadly, in the case of Reitz studies few, if any, theorise about change leadership grounded in the lived experiences of student leaders.[153] Jansen's (2016) analysis of post-Reitz leadership for change is the most notable exception to the silences in the current literature on student leaders, reconciliation and campus change broadly, on the change leadership of student leaders following Reitz and on theorising change and change leadership grounded in the lived experience of students. Arguably, then, this study continues the line of inquiry opened by Jansen's research by describing how these four student leaders became post-Reitz change leaders and through developing theoretical perspectives of change leadership grounded in their lived experiences.

However, the findings of the study and conceptual development of the findings as theories of change also refine post-colonial notions of alternative knowledge and ambiguous identity (Soudien, 2001), critique the binary perspectives of racial hierarchy of critical race theory (Ambrosio, 2017; Gaither, 2015; Jansen, 2010b), and further develop notions of ignorance as knowledge and as cultural action against change (Girard, 1982; Jansen, 2012; Mills, 1997). These developments have implications for research, policy and the practice of change leadership in higher education.

[153] See Elliker, Coetzee & Kotze, 2013; Jansen, 2016; Keet & Nel, 2016; Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2014; Walker & Loots, 2016.

11.3.1 Research implications

The current literature on Reitz reveals that the incident represented a series of crises, namely a crisis of intimacy, a crisis of institutional culture, complicity and legitimacy, and a crisis of leadership, as much as it resembled social hierarchies and post-apartheid identity struggles of race and gender – of whiteness, new Afrikaner identities and violent masculinities.[154] Although not as numerous as those that investigate the causes of Reitz, studies that reflected on the post-Reitz interventions revealed that an emotional infrastructure of brokenness, authenticity and courage is critical to change leadership (Ambrosio, 2017; Jansen, 2016; Smith, 2013), and that reconciliation is a process of relational transformation, which must offer a space for righteous anger about injustice (Boesak, 2013; Taylor, 2014a). The research also uncovered a new governmentality in campus change work that focuses on policy consensus, and revealed the need for intra-generational projects for change (Keet & Nel, 2016; Suransky & Van der Merwe, 2014).

However, the findings of this study highlight important paucities in the current scholarship on Reitz, which also correspond with silences in broader research on students, race and change. These include silences on student leaders' role in leading campus change, on ambiguities of students' racial lifeworlds and identities, and on the theoretical implications of student leaders' struggle with race.

The current silence of student leaders' voices in research on Reitz is an important omission. The literature does not describe what life was like for students or student leaders in campus residences prior to and during Reitz, or how students thought about and became campus leaders during this time. It does not extricate the lived experiences and sense-making of student leaders during the post-Reitz interventions, or explore their narratives for theoretical perspectives of campus change and change leadership. The consequence of these omissions is that the role of student leaders in the post-Reitz process of campus reconciliation and change remain largely undervalued and unexplored in scholarship on Reitz.

The four student biographies, findings and theoretical perspectives of this study, however, reveal the important role student leaders played in campus change, and the potential of their stories to make sense of Reitz, change and change leadership.

[154] See Barnard, 2010; Haupt, 2012; Jansen, 2016; Mordaunt-Bexiga, 2011; Shefer, 2012; Sutherland, 2013; Soudien, 2010; Van der Merwe & Van Reenen, 2016; West, 2010.

Read against the findings of this study, the omissions in current research by implication also reveal a questionable depiction of students in relation to campus change (as in Reitz) in the research, namely a fixed positioning of students only as objects of a change process; as recipients of change, not the authors; and therefore as a deficit, not a resource for change. However, this study showed that agency and subjectivity were central to how the four students leaders engaged with their environments prior to, during and after Reitz. Their agency matured in bridge-building as their way of doing change and being change leaders on campus (see 11.1 above, Finding 7). Moreover, their struggles over time with racial knowledge and identity, also while serving in various leadership roles at school and on campus, revealed a conceptual structure as basis for bridge-building as a theory of change (see section 11.2.1 above, Bridge-building as theory of change). Taken more broadly, these findings show that student leaders' lived experiences of leading change on divided campuses offer fertile ground for new theories of change in higher education to emerge, as much as it illustrates the need to increasingly focus on student leaders' biographies in scholarship on student leadership and student diversity.

A second paucity in research on Reitz relates to the paradoxes, ambiguities and discontinuities that mark the lives and transitional environments of the students and student leaders at the University of the Free State at the time. The current literature on Reitz, as also the broader literature on students, race and change, largely retains the distanced black and white positionalities of race in the established racial binary at play in research on student diversity. The binary positions take ignorance and oppression as central to whiteness and blackness respectively, and for the most part current scholarship on student diversity (and on Reitz) do not go beyond these definitions to explore alternative knowledge and identities at play in the lives of students and student leaders – avoiding interstices that emerge in racial hierarchies.

Racial binaries favour and foreground divergences above convergences, when reflecting on the experiences and sense-making of black and white students. In this study, however, the convergences in lived experiences of struggle with knowledge and identity, which I termed 'similarities', emerged as a more prominent, and the leading, framework to interpret the four life narratives of this study, although the diverging incidents between black and white, and female and male, corresponded with the racial and gender binaries considered normal and prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa (see 11.1 above, Finding 1).

This finding also reflects the contextual realities of a transitional society the student leaders of this study lived with while growing up. Their schools were engaged in processes of racial integration, as were their home communities, sporting teams, cultural organisations and churches – their lives were defined by wide-ranging transitions, rather than strictly and solely by the racial hierarchies of the past (see 11.1 above, Finding 2). However, the social hierarchies of the past were still present, demanding conformity and disrupting the student leaders' forward movement away from ignorance – they were left in-between, so that in-betweenness, ambiguity and liminality became defining features of their lives (see 11.1 above, Finding 3.) In-betweenness also caused the student leaders to oscillate between new and old ways of being and doing; a messy process from ignorance to critical awareness, as they struggle with reprisals for not conforming to the racial binaries of their in-groups, and gain courage to break the norm through embracing encounters (see 11.1 above, Finding 5).

Taken together these findings of this study argue for scholarship on Reitz, as on student leadership and student diversity, to broaden its research focus to include spaces in-between the racial binary positions of black and white, but then not as a space of fluid hybridity or multi-identity, but firstly as an alternative (third) space of knowledge and identity. In so doing, research on Reitz, as research on student leaders generally, will more precisely reflect the actual lifeworlds of student leaders on divided campuses and transitional environments, but also more fully engage with emerging (new) knowledge and identities.

These findings also imply the need for further conceptual refinement of the notion of 'in-betweenness' as a feature of post-colonial studies, especially in relation to scholarship on change and change leadership on divided campuses. Different to how in-betweenness as definition of post-colonial identity generally refers to a fluidity and hybridity in being, knowing and doing (Bhabha, 1994; Go, 2012; Kalua, 2014; Young, 2003), in this study in-betweenness emerged as an established ontological framework, as much as a distinctive third positionality in relation to the binary of race. These findings show that a racial hierarchy can be understood as not referring to a binary of two opposite positionalities, of black and white, but rather as a triad of three distinguishable positionalities, of black, white and 'in-between' – not a new notion in post-colonial studies, but here with an additional observation, that of the ever-growing emergence of in-betweenness as actualised knowledge and identity in the lives of these four student leaders.

In-betweenness here was not equal to hybridity, but to a new ontology emerging over time in the lives of a first generation engaged fully from birth in a transitional society (born-free South Africans) – new not by mixing, but through emergence. This finding offers a correction to our understanding of in-betweenness as a passing phase between binary opposites – it is a definitive positionality, framework and foundation for change leadership, based on new knowledge emerging in transitional contexts.

It is this possibility of new knowledge and identity that highlights the third paucity in current literature, namely the silence on epistemological implications of the lived experiences of student leaders who play a leading role in reconciliation and change on divided campuses, such as in the case of Reitz.

The student life narratives of this study revealed an underlying knowledge defined by transitions that emerged over time in the lives of the four student leaders (see 11.1 above, Finding 6). As they struggled with in-betweenness and encountered reprisal and embrace for attempting to cross racial divides, these four student leaders gained new ways of being, knowing and engaging with their world – a new knowledge I defined as an 'epistemology of transitionality (see 11.2.2 above, Transitionality as knowledge and identity). This finding suggests that Reitz was firstly a crisis of conflicting knowledge regimes, of ignorance and new transitional knowledge, as much as it represented the crises already noted in the literature of identity, intimacy, leadership and institutional complicity.

However, more importantly, the theoretical development of the findings of the study revealed that the notion of transitionality carries metatheoretical implications for scholarship on change leadership. Transitionality firstly refers to the knowledge framework that underpins the theory of change of this study, and secondly refers to the metatheoretical scheme that I propose here as the foundation for bridge-building as theory of change. Transitionality as an epistemology interacts with in-betweenness as an ontology, and with the praxis of building bridges as a methodology to enable change leadership. These findings demonstrate that when research on students, race and change, done through case studies such as Reitz, focuses on the agency and subjectivity of student leaders, nuanced theoretical perspectives on change and change leadership become possible, as they may emerge from the refined and detailed accounts of the lived experiences of those students engaged in reconciliation on divided campuses.

11.3.2 Policy implications

Transformation at South African colleges and universities follows the agenda for change set by the education white paper for higher education transformation developed in the legislative process for the South African Higher Education Act adopted in 1997 (Act 101 of 1997).

The document, the Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, defines transformation in terms of the role of higher education in a transitional society that wants to move from its apartheid past to a new constitutional democracy, with 'a single national coordinated higher education system', wherein, 'all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era' of 'a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society committed to equity, justice and a better life for all' (DOE, 1997, p. 3, 5).

The White paper set a vision for a higher education system that, 'will support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and nonsexist social order' (DOE, 1997, p. 7).

White paper 3 served as foundation for the policy discourses on transformation that followed Reitz. The incident galvanized the national discourse on transformation in public higher education in South Africa, which lead to a series of policy developments to review and expedite transformation of Higher Education in South Africa (HESA).

The Ministerial Committee on Progress towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (Soudien Report) was appointed in response to Reitz, and the Soudien Report represents the first marker on policy debates since the renewed discourse on higher education transformation that followed Reitz.

Position papers by HESA and the South African Council of Higher Education (CHE) on the Soudien Report followed in 2010, during which year the Minister of Higher Education and Training also called and hosted a first National Summit on Higher Education Transformation to reflect on the findings and recommendations of the Soudien Report (DHET, 2010).

One of the recommendations of the Soudien Report was to establish a oversight committee on higher education transformation, which was set up in 2013 with the purpose of monitoring progress on transformation at public higher education institutions and advising the minister of higher education and training accordingly.[155]

In 2014 the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) called a national hearing on transformation at South African institutions of higher learning (SAHRC, 2016), and in 2015 the DHET called a second National Summit on Higher Education Transformation (DHET, 2016a). In 2016 the policy developments continued with the DHET promulgating a new policy framework for the realisation of social inclusion in the South African post-school education and training system (DHET, 2016b), and with the publication of the SAHRC Report on its 2014 hearing on transformation in HESA.

A review of these documents reveals an ever-deepening process of higher education transformation that over time narrows its focus, while broadening its reach, from system-wide equity, redress and quality (White Paper 3, 1997), to disjunctures between the policy and practice of institutional transformation (Soudien report, 2008), to social inclusion and leadership for nation-building (DHET Social Inclusion Policy Framework, 2016), to the lack of a uniform definition of transformation and lethargy in transforming institutional cultures (SAHRC Report, 2016). The SAHRC Report (2016) in its introductory pages prominently features a quote from later in the report that I take as a current indicator of emerging policy perspectives for transformation in the sector:

> …it becomes apparent that issues of transformation are not only the concern of previously white universities, but equally concern previously black universities, which are confronted by other forms of prejudices and discrimination… (SAHRC, 2016, p. 21)

I consider this statement indicative of a policy shift as it illustrates a shift away from using only narrow racial definitions as framework for transformation of higher education, and increasingly focusing on institutional cultures that sustain discrimination, exclusion and social injustice, as these problems find expression in the unique contexts and histories of each campus.

[155] See http://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/the-oversight-committee-on-university-transformati. Retrieved on 15/08/2017.

Read in conjunction with the Social Inclusion Policy (2016), it seems that current policy perspectives aim to balance the need for institution-specific change interventions, and the need for central oversight of public higher education institution (through strategic reports and institutional charters). A second important policy development that emerged since the Soudien Report (2008) is the increasing recognition of and focus on the role of student leaders in processes of institutional transformation. The Soudien Report called for student leadership development and a review of student residential cultures, while the Social Inclusion Policy specifically names student councils as key stakeholders in change interventions.

The findings of this study correspond with the current policy perspectives as outlined in the various policy documents relating to higher education transformation since Reitz. However, this research also reveals three important factors that are not sufficiently addressed in current policy, namely the subjectivity of student leaders as change authors, the complexities of transitional environments and the epistemological modalities of student engagement outside the classroom.

The recommendations of the first National Higher Education Transformation Summit (DHET, 2010) included a recommendation for the development of a framework for student leadership development, as well as proposing that a national training institute be created to offer leadership-training programmes for student representatives. A progress report on these recommendations was tabled at the second National Higher Education Transformation Summit, reporting that leadership development workshops on various themes took place prior to the summit (DHET, 2016). These developments are encouraging and represent real progress for student engagement in higher education transformation.

However, none of the reports or policy frameworks referenced here go further than recommending that institutions increase the representation of students in the institutional discourses for change, increase the support provided to student governance structures and provide a greater number of programmes for student leadership development. These do not place students at the center of curriculum and pedagogical transformation, the core of institutional change, and continue to position student leaders as recipients, as objects, of change interventions, even if student representatives are part of institutional structures that design interventions.

What the lived experience of the four student leaders of this study revealed is that the positionality of the student leaders as authors of change in their residences, and on campus, mediated change and disrupted a deficit perspective that considers students first in terms of racial ignorance, and therefore the target population for change interventions.

Such an understanding of students may also result from a misreading of the knowledge regimes at play in the lives of students and student leaders as they arrive and lead on campus. The findings on transitionality in this study revealed the possibility of new knowledge present in the lives of student leaders, which emerges from the transitional dynamics of their lifeworlds, and that may serve as a resource in the design and practice of transformation. The policy documents do engage knowledge as important theme, but engage knowledge transformation almost exclusively in relation to formal curriculum change in faculty programmes, and which generally do not include students.

The epistemology of transitionality described in this study reveals the importance of knowledge frameworks at play in student engagement outside the classroom, and its potential when leveraged for discourses on and the practice of transformation on campus. Noting that transitional knowledge and alternative identities may play out differently on different campuses, each with its unique dynamics, these developments must be reflected in policy perspectives on institutional change broadly.

A final important implication for policy on higher education transformation in South Africa relates to the ever-increasing ambiguities of knowledge and identity that emerge in transitional contexts of post-apartheid South Africa. More so than referring to the progress achieved for change since the Education White Paper 3, these ambiguities refer to the increasing complexities and paradoxes in social identities and in diverse positionalities in social hierarchies. The findings of this study show that convergences increasingly emerge between binary opposites in various categories of student diversity. Race and gender divergences do persist, but that is not the only reality, so that the continued focus in policy work on the set binaries of race, increasingly will limit what progress may be achieved for social inclusion on campuses.

The converging theme of in-betweenness revealed in this study is critical in this regard, as it requires policy perspectives to transcend the easy definitions of racial binaries and offer new modalities of diversity that may define institutional cultures.

Current policy positions already do indicate that institutional cultures are as important, if not more so, than individual or in-group attitudes and performances (Soudien Report, 2008), as well as broadening the list of diversity categories targeted for social inclusion work (Social Inclusion Policy, 2016), and recognising the unique challenges for human rights cultures at diverse (racial) campuses (SAHRC Report, 2016). Still, as much as these policy positions provide useful frameworks for the practice of change and change leadership in South African higher education, further developments in transformation policy need to reflect the new knowledge and positionalities mediated by a transitional society.

11.3.3 Practice implications

The practice of change leadership on divided campuses only recently gained prominence as critically important theme in research on higher education transformation, most notably through the work of Jansen (2006, 2009b, 2010b, 2016) and Ambrosio (2017), among others, which largely focus on the critical role of emotional praxis in leading change, such as through brokenness and courage. A growing literature on post-conflict pedagogies and reconciliation further develop this line of inquiry in change leadership (Zembylas, 2012c, 2015). Although Jansen specifically draws on the experiences of student leaders in reflecting on change leadership, student leaders generally do not feature as an established theme in scholarship on institutional transformation, while the current literature on student leadership practices address general practices of leadership on campuses, and not in relation to campus change or reconciliation (Kouzes & Posner, 2014; Weber & Dennison 2014).

This study revealed several new perspectives on the role of student leaders in campus change, which suggest several important implications for the practice of change leadership by university administrators and student leaders alike. The findings of the study emphasise the critical importance of relational distance between leaders, of complexity and ambiguity in leadership approaches, and of third spaces in designing change.

The findings on similarities between student leaders' lives, and the underlying (shared) transitionality of being, knowing and doing of bridge-builders, represent a continuous *struggle with distance* that administrators and students as change leaders face. Social hierarchies, such as race and gender, continuously drive leaders to firstly consider the differences between groups, such as between black and white students, and assume distance as the defining reality of inter-group contact.

The underlying binaries of racial identity also drive leaders to locate themselves in that hierarchy and engage with change from that perspective. This also ensures that often only those administrators or student leaders that visibly conform to the stereotypical notions of a particular identity are engaged in the process of change. In this way change processes are considered valid only when leaders that conform to the norm of black or white ingroups and formally represent their ingroup, participate in the process and represent their ingroup agenda.

In such a situation, the achievements for change are limited since ingroup representatives must retain their exclusive agenda in order to retain their position as elected representative of their ingroup – a white leader must continue to represent white interests to retain his place as representative of his in-group, for instance. Thus, change leaders in such contexts must intentionally and visibly engage with, expose and disrupt the dynamics of social distances in a process of reconciliation and campus change; explicating the hidden subtleties of social distances in public engagement with different groups; designing experiences of togetherness across boundaries in a multitude of programmes; and modelling in their own lives and leadership practice how to reach out and move across distances between diverse groups.

Moreover, change processes are able to disrupt hierarchy and distances more effectively and sustainably by focusing on and engaging those *campus leaders that are familiar with in-betweenness* and ambiguity. Often these leaders are not the elected representatives of different constituencies, but rather leaders who were pushed out of in-groups as scapegoats for their non-conformity to group norms, as was the case for the student leaders in this study. Such leaders are familiar with crossing racial divides and may co-author change processes that disrupt persistent distances and the norms and codes of traditional hierarchies, and that offer spaces for new perspectives to emerge.

However, such a focus only becomes possible when change leaders, both administrators and student leaders, focus on embracing encounters that affirm alternative identities, and invite new and counter-cultural perspectives – an environment that affirms in-betweenness causes other 'in-between leaders' to come forward and take their place in the process of change. As the study finding on the transformative tension of reprisal and embrace shows, such encounters play a critical role to break down dominant regimes of ignorance. However, an embracing environment that invites bridge-builders to step up and join the change process does not emerge in an incidental way, but must be formally constructed through programmes that formally recognise and empower new leaders to lead change.

In-betweenness as a fundamental understanding of bridge-building identity also shows that administrators and student leaders become co-authors of change when they *discover and actualise that mutuality of alternative identities*. This, however, requires courage on the part of all campus leaders to lead with brokenness and retain an uncompromising focus on new positionalities, new meanings and unconventional designs of change – the particular modalities of change leadership that work with third space social technologies.

This may be the most difficult part of change leadership as outlined in the discussion of bridge-building as theory of change above, namely to *hold the focus on the complexities, paradoxes and messiness* of constructing new lifeworlds on campus, and not relapse to the familiar, easier and seemingly safer definitions of social hierarchies. However, the study also shows that the movement from ignorance to the praxis of bridge-building is not a straight line of becoming more and more critically aware. The process is beset by moments of doubt and confusion, as much as by moments of triumph and clarity, so that leaders must *accept it as a constant factor that they will oscillate* between the old and the new as they encounter reprisal and embrace.

A newly discovered community of bridge-builders are the saving grace for such leaders, as was the case for the student leaders of this study – their church communities and spiritual mentors provided them with a new community that resonated their values of in-betweenness and new identities as bridge-builders. The support offered to change leaders by in-group members has limitations, due to the continued impact of the established binaries of identity and belonging that underpin any in-group. Administrators and student leaders that lead change need a 'third community of togetherness', a community of bridgebuilders, which are engaged with and reflect new ways of being, knowing and doing.

However, the fact that religious communities played this role in these student leaders' lives may be a phenomenon that is specific to the particular context of the University of the Free State, since this was the only space in the otherwise racially segregated environment of this rural province with its racially segregated farming and mining economies. It was also not all faith communities, but one very specific church community that intentionally worked at building a racially integrated membership, which leads me to conclude that the defining factor of this finding is not the religious nature of the community, but the fact that it was the only community where they as bridgebuilders could experience racial togetherness.

This finding indicates an important implication for the practice of change leadership at divided campuses, namely to *develop a supportive community for bridge-builders beyond racial in-and out-groups*. Therefore, a change process that aims to achieve reconciliation and change must equally focus on programmes that build togetherness and solidarity between bridge-builders as a unique and distinct community, as it focuses on programmes that bring the campus community together beyond racial distances.

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that change leaders are required to *engage the transitional realities of a changing campus as its 'destination'*, and not merely as a 'passing phase' on the way to a peace – an implication of the study findings that resonates with the Gramscian notion of a transitional counter-hegemony as a third moment in societal transformation from a past to an envisaged society (Carroll & Ratner, 1994); an in-between society with distinctive and unique politics and social dynamics.

Change leaders and change processes that view and engage transitional dynamics only as part of a passing phase of struggle to move toward a peaceful resolution of a current conflict, without realising, are not transforming the underlying social hierarchies that establish racial in- and out-groups.

By defining reconciliation as the recovery of peaceful interaction between different groups, such change processes merely mediate a less threatening version of the social hierarchies that caused the conflict in the first place. Unaware of it, change leaders in this way maintain the established in-groups and out-groups that solidify the very social hierarchies that the change process must disrupt.

For this reason the findings of this study also implies a critique of the practice of reconciliation that seeks peace, since peace do not a equal fundamental change of social dynamics. In this way, when 'a lasting peace' is a goal of change, reconciliation counter-intuitively becomes part of the false promises of reprisal, which the study findings revealed to be a methodology of ignorance. In reality, as shown in the lives of the student leaders of this study, new conflicts soon follow any peace achieved, making transitions and transitionality a permanent part of change.

Rather, transitional contexts offers a third space of new knowledge that represents a new cultural and political positionality, but also provide a conceptual framework to design new ways of being together and invite alternative identities of in-betweenness.

For this reason, the practice of change and change leadership, as revealed in this study, requires *an unrelenting focus on designing and attempting third spaces* – new meanings, realities and lifeworlds that emerge from new, shared communities of in-betweenness, rather than from in- and out-groups caught in the binary opposites of social hierarchies. Bridgebuilders that construct bridge-building communities with values and performances of in-betweenness together become such communities of change.

CHAPTER 12
CONCLUSION

We don't need no education[156]
We don't need no thought control
No dark sarcasm in the classroom
Teachers leave them kids alone
Hey! Teachers! Leave them kids alone!
All in all it's just another brick in the wall
All in all you're just another brick in the wall.

Since its release in 1978, this iconic song by Pink Floyd has been used as illustration of education that reproduces conformity, not freedom (Nel, 2014). In 1994, five years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Pink Floyd released another iconic album, Division Bell, which features the front cover artwork of the talking heads I use to illustrate the major findings of this study (see preface). The album includes a song that again deals with walls, "The Day the Wall came down". It deals with the themes of change in the life of the band. As poignant as "Another Brick in the Wall", its lyrics reflect a confusing reality of freedom, when the constraints of the past return after the joy of celebration.

On[157] the day the wall came down
They threw the locks onto the ground
And with glasses high we raised a cry for freedom had arrived …
Now life devalues day by day
As friends and neighbours turn away
And there's a change that, even with regret, cannot be undone ...
Now frontiers shift like desert sands
While nations wash their bloodied hands
Of loyalty, of history, in shades of grey.

In the lyrics of these songs, I find resonated the dialectic tension of naiveté (ignorance) and bridge-building (transitionality) that emerged in the life narratives of the study participants.

[156] http://www.pink-floyd-lyrics.com/html/another-brick-2-wall.html. Accessed 25/01/16.
[157] http://www.pink-floyd-lyrics.com/html/a-great-day-for-freedom-lyrics-division-bell.html. Accessed 25/01/16.

12.1 The promise of new knowledge

In this study, I made sense of the race reconciliation among students at the University of the Free State during the period 2007-2011, by describing and interpreting the lived experiences of four students leading reconciliation in a post-Reitz lifeworld on campus. In 2007, the university adopted a new policy for racial integration of campus residences, which was vehemently contested by the university community, also among students and other stakeholders. Four white students of a men's residence produced a video to protest the policy and racial integration initiatives by playing initiation games with black female workers, amongst others, offering the workers food to eat that the students urinated in – the Reitz incident. Early in 2008 the video was distributed online and went viral, leading to national and global outrage and extraordinary interventions for change on campus.

Joining the university as part of the change interventions that followed, I was intimately involved in the reconciliation process among students. As insider-researcher, I wanted to study this change on campus from a 'ground-up' perspective by reflecting on what students experienced prior to, during and after Reitz, and as part of the interventions for change. I wanted to know how the experiences of the student leaders of the study prior to arriving at the campus would shape and influence their experiences of race once on campus, and if earlier lived experience influenced their shifts to lead racial reconciliation and change.

I expected that their "knowledge in the blood" (Jansen, 2009a) would be expressed in a continuation of their understanding of race from life prior to campus to life on campus – their biographies of racial knowledge and identity. The lives of the students illustrate the continuation of the 'wall of ignorance' that sustained racial hierarchy and distance in their communities, schools and on campus prior to Reitz. The 'bricks in the wall' of their lives as post-apartheid generation are most vividly shown in the continued segregation in campus life prior to the Reitz-trauma.

However, the life narratives of the student leaders also revealed alternative knowledge and identities that differed from the 'wall of ignorance' that marked their lives over time from a young age. Their lives also show the newness of racial nearness and friendship emerging as part of the transformation of South African schools, as well as their attempts to challenge established cultures.

These themes also continue from life prior to campus to life on campus, but more hidden and suppressed in this new context until the post-Reitz interventions, when nearness and embrace become prominent features of campus leadership and life and the student leaders began to lead change.

However, in such instances, when the study participants expressed alternative racial knowledge and identities from, and counter-cultural courage to their racial in-groups and institutional cultures, they faced reprisals, in which, as the song by Pink Floyd points out, "friends and neighbours turn away … and nations wash their hands of loyalty and history".

12.2 People of the study

I focused on student leaders who played a prominent role in racial reconciliation among students and in fostering change on campus. I selected four students who held senior leadership roles in residences during and/or after Reitz and who became the 'talk of the town' on campus because of the steps they took to lead for change among students. Regarded as pioneers, they would be exemplars of a larger group of student leaders who showed counter-intuitive leadership for reconciliation and change on campus.

Two of the student leaders were white and Afrikaans, representing the stereotype of conservative, racist whiteness and thus expected to resist change by defending white student interests. The other two student leaders in the study were black students (Sotho and Venda), representing the stereotype of radical, political blackness and expected to demand change by advancing black student interests. I selected and recruited these student leaders as study participants because they defied expectation and stereotype, crossing over, as it were, to build bridges across the racial divides that tormented the campus at that stage.

Who were these student leaders? Where did their journeys begin? How did race feature in their lives before coming to university, and once there? What roles were they expected to, and actually played in the race turbulence of the university while they were there as students and as student leaders?

Thabelo became a prominent black leader of the change process on campus after a video became public in which he is seen to oversee the initiation of newly appointed white residence committee members of his black residence.

Earlier, Thabelo was arrested during the strikes that followed on the Reitz incident and he was considered a promising candidate for SASCO (the radical and mainly black student political organisation on campus), but was rejected as member by his comrades for leading racial reconciliation, as well because of the video. He was also suspended as chairperson of the residence.

The video galvanised white political resistance against the change process and caused embarrassment for black political interests. The event is significant because Thabelo and his residence student committee (black and white) actually wanted to support racial integration with the event. The initiation was intended as a shared experience of initiation to symbolise equality, inclusiveness and unity among the leaders of the residence – something all residences attempted in different ways at the time.

Dawie was a prominent white student leader and chairperson of the oldest and best-respected men's residence on campus, which continued traditional and violent initiation practices. Even stranger to his in-group than was the case for Aletta, Dawie also moved to a black men's residence considered a stronghold for black political activity, in order to support racial integration, and later helped to establish a new, interracial men's residence for students residing off-campus. However, his most prominent work for change was as coordinator of an SRC programme for leadership development, the PO10SEE (potency) camp. For years in a row, he was the heart and soul of these camps, which students considered a major first step when running for campus leadership. For many years, this programme offered the only space in campus life for black and white to interact freely and build interracial friendships.

Aletta was a prominent white leader on campus and was chairperson of a traditional white, Afrikaans women's residence. Counter-intuitively she later became deputy-chair of an interim student representative council on campus after the politically aligned and racially charged campus-SRC had been suspended. Breaking with the norm of her in-group, she was also a leading voice in a broad student forum that designed a new SRC constitution and moved to a black woman's residence at the end of her term of office as chairperson of her residence. Here she assisted the process of racial integration in the new black residence, which was facing white flight. Later she helped to establish a new, racially integrated woman's residence for students residing off-campus.

Lerato arrived on campus during the first year of post-Reitz interventions and became a prominent student leader when she was elected as the first black chairperson of a traditionally white woman's residence considered a stronghold for conservative white interests. Elected at the same time as the election of Barack Obama as president of the USA, she was claimed as a representative for black and white partisan interests – SASCO claimed her election as evidence of black victory of white interests, while white residences claimed her election as evidence of their being 'post-racial'.

The life histories of Thabelo, Dawie, Aletta and Lerato offer two opportunities relevant to my research, namely to describe lives struggling with knowledge and identity in post-conflict transitional contexts, and to interpret data that analyses the phenomenon of leadership for racial reconciliation on a divided university campus.

12.3 Re-reading and re-writing: the study method

In order for current scholarship to gain from exploring the lived experience of the four student leaders, the study had two tasks, namely to develop rich descriptions of the lives of participants and then to analyse these biographies for their trajectories of racial knowledge and identity. This work necessitated an approach to and methodologies for qualitative inquiry that explores the social, psychosocial and cultural aspects of the construction of knowledge and identity.

I positioned this study as phenomenological research that aims to describe a phenomenon by interpreting how people make sense of their lived experience. This approach also offered the methodologies to resolve risks of bias on my part as insider-researcher, namely through bracketing, verification and horizontalisation that I applied during all phases of the project.

I used the life-histories method and the critical-incident technique to develop descriptions of the lived experience of the study participants from transcriptions of the research interviews with the student leaders. These methods revealed similar incidents and narrative plots across lives so that I was able to develop a narrative structure for drafting the biographies of the students. The life histories (Chapters 6-9) first describe experiences during early life and high school, then their arrival and life on a racialized campus, followed by their first experience of dramatic turn in racial knowledge.

Thereafter the biographies describe experiences of stepping into leadership, followed by their responses to Reitz and descriptions of their leadership for change on campus. The stories of change close with descriptions of incidents that caused a second turn in racial knowledge and identity, as well as how the participants found new meaning in how they think about their lives as change leaders.

I considered the participants as co-authors in writing up their life histories. I used open-ended and semi-structured strategies to enable the students to remember and share critical incidents from their lives in a series and successive rounds of research interviews. This ensured an authentic participant voice in narrating their lives.

I also offered the participants the opportunity to comment and make changes to my written accounts of their lives and required their formal approval of the final versions of the life narratives included in the dissertation. In this way, I developed the research into a rigorous process of writing and re-writing to ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

I used coding techniques to explore the life narratives as primary data for the next phase of the study, namely to analyse the student biographies for patterns of experience, themes and conceptual categories that describe their transition from racial ignorance to change leadership.

Based on the coded analyses of the data I synthesised my findings to develop a taxonomy of concepts that describes the phenomenon of, and theorise my findings on student leadership for racial reconciliation and change on university campuses.

Drawing on a framework of concepts I developed as a response to the dearth of literature on student leadership and racial reconciliation, I described a conceptual structure emerging from the analyses to make sense of how the students gained the alternative knowledge and identities that enabled their change leadership.

This implied a rigorous process of reading and re-reading to allow categories of meaning to emerge and to verify the interplay between concepts emerging from the thematic synthesis. I engaged the study participants in the process of reading the data in a second round of interviews by requesting their comment on bridge-building as possible framework to make sense of their experiences overtime of in-betweenness and change leadership on campus. Reading and re-reading of patterns and themes emerging from the data ensures the transferability of the research findings.

However, transferability in phenomenological research differs from typical generalisations in positivist research that wants to develop theoretical models applicable to all other similar cases. Transferability in phenomenology refers to the general aspects of the phenomenon under investigation as it is illustrated in the unique case study of the research – existential and singular generalisation (Van Manen, 2014). This means that 'bridge-building', as master theme and finding of the research, is significant for its contribution to describe of the phenomenon of student change leadership as illustrated in the unique cases of the four lives explored in this study.

And yet, in addition to offering this conceptual framework, taken together, the experiences of the four student leaders also provide a portrait of the struggle with race of a generation, of South Africa's first post-apartheid generation; a generation of young people growing up and/or who were born after 1994 and controversially (for implying a homogeneous group free from apartheid) named the 'born-free' generation (Cronje, 2015; Maphunye, Ledwaba & Kobjana, 2014, p. 163; Fleetwood, 2012, p. 5). This portrait is unique, because on the one hand it shows that instead of freedom, the reality of their lives in South Africa today is one of being "born free" only to struggle, while on the other hand it shows that their struggle is different from that of their parents'. It is not a struggle for political, racial freedoms and rights, but rather a struggle between two ways of knowing and engaging the world – the struggle between the "epistemology of ignorance" and an "epistemology of transitionality". It is a struggle with the continued dominance of racial hierarchy and distance at home and elsewhere, when their lived experience demands space for in-betweenness and bridge-building.

12.4 Bridge-building as theory: the findings and the outcomes of the research

> *If the epistemological diversity of the world is to be accounted for, other theories must be developed and anchored in other epistemologies – the epistemologies of the South that adequately account for the realities of the global South (De Sousa Santos, 2012, p. 1).*

The findings of this study provided a foundation to theorise about change in the lives of the four student leaders of the study, resulting in a theory of Bridge-building and a metatheory of transitionality as outcomes of the research – theories emerging in a grounded fashion from the lives of a post-apartheid generation who's lifeworlds are part of the global South.

Their life narratives revealed a story of new epistemology that developed over time in response to the transitional and post-colonial dynamics of their society and generation – a new knowledge read in their similar struggles with race. The four student leaders' lives show similar experiences that transcend the typical definitions of racial opposites in the established definitions of difference as two polarities in a racial hierarchy. The lifeworlds of the students, though disrupted by racism, were not defined by continued racial distances, but by the transitional nature of post-apartheid South Africa. Similar episodes revealed the similar pattern of participants discovering their ignorance, but also their in-betweenness as alternative epistemology. Similar experiences of reprisal and embrace emerged across lives and different ideologies, which affected their knowledge and identities to lead change in similar ways. This struggle revealed an underlying conflict between ignorance and transitional knowledge, with bridge-building emerging as a cornerstone of new knowledge and identity to lead reconciliation and change. The stories of struggle with ignorance and in-betweenness in the lives of the participants reveal a tension between racial "knowing" and "being". Ignorance transferred to the participants a sense of self, of being, defined by the racial binaries of either black or white and left them stranded at the margins as undefined or undesirable in-betweeners – coconuts or traitors. An epistemology (knowing) of ignorance established the ontology (being) of racial binary identity.

However, their alternative experiences of solidarity beyond race in transitional environments provided the participants with instances of *being* different to established racial hierarchies – being in between racial identities. Reprisals deterred them from claiming in-betweenness as a preferred sense of self – prior to Reitz they did not translate their *being* different to *knowing* differently. However, the post-Reitz interventions embraced their in-betweenness so that the four student leaders' underlying knowledge of in-betweenness matured into the praxis of bridge-building as they co-authored a new campus community – revealing in their lived experience of leading change an *epistemology* to counter ignorance. I term this different way of knowing an "epistemology of transitionality".

Their different *being* (in-betweenness) engendered a different *knowing* (transitionality), which evolved as different *doing* (bridge-building). Put in metatheoretical terms, their *ontology* of in-betweenness gave rise to an epistemology of transitionality, which was actualised in a *methodology* of bridge-building.

Bridge-building as a theory of change and transitionality as the foundational metatheory of building bridges together represent my definition of the phenomenon of student leaders leading racial reconciliation for change – the findings of my study. One (bridge-building) is the actualised and manifest reality of the other (transitionality).

Transitionality as metatheory provides a scheme of ontology, epistemology and methodology that moves bridge-building beyond pragmatic considerations of change management – from bridge-building as survival tactic to bridge-building as deep change. Bridge-building as theory of change provides a methodology for the praxis of change leadership that moves transitionality from an underlying and unconscious reality to a present and actualised reality of agency on the surface of lived experience – from the otherness of in-betweenness to the co-authorship of bridge-building. The heartbeat of bridge-building as theory of change is the dialectical tension between experiences of 'reprisal' and experiences of 'embrace', where reprisal deters in-betweenness as project to prevent transitionality, and embrace claims in-betweenness as resource to actualise the knowledge and identity of bridge-building as change.

As a unique contribution to the field, I conclude my study with trends of experiences in the life histories that allows a theory of reprisal to emerge. I describe and develop the notion of 'reprisal' by highlighting its cultural and political projects to disrupt in-betweenness and transitionality, namely to promise belonging, pretend acceptance of alternative knowledge, threaten non-conformity and then betray, scapegoat, isolate and exile group members that break with tradition.

12.5 Strengths, limitations and recommendations

Originality in research refers to unique and new contributions of a study to a particular field of scholarship as well as the independent and maturing nature of the research, which implies subjective considerations relevant to the particular nature of a study and its theoretical field (Clarke & Lunt, 2014; Edwards, 2014; Gill & Dolan, 2015). The strength of this study is in the originality of its findings and its attempt at a broadened theoretical reflection, though its originality also provides for the limitations of the study. This study attempted to achieve originality by ascertaining thematic silences in current literature, using qualitative methodologies that emphasise the uniqueness of data and by developing conceptual structures and subsequent theoretical perspectives grounded in, but distinctive in the field of change leadership in higher education.

Strengths

My review of current literature (Chapter 2) reveals a dearth in leadership on the combined themes of student leadership, knowledge and identity and racial reconciliation. The study required a broader reading of higher education literature relevant to the research, which included scholarship in student engagement, leadership and diversity.

I focused on student diversity literature and ascertained that the themes of alternative knowledge and identities receive the least attention in current scholarship compared to the racial attitudes and performances of typical racial identities, such as black or white. The review also revealed useful concepts in postcolonial theory to enable the interpretative work of the study, such as the notions of hybridity and in-betweenness. Thus, while the study is grounded in current scholarship on student engagement, leadership and diversity, as well as engage established theoretical approaches framework of concepts, it refines and offers new contributions to research on change leadership of students in higher education.

The review of literature also revealed the comparative silence of student voices in research on Reitz as an important case study on race and change in higher education. In order to contribute original student voices to research on Reitz specifically, and on student leadership for racial reconciliation and change in general, I employed phenomenological methods that bracket researcher bias and provide rich descriptions of lived experiences (Chapter 3).

The existential (general) and singular (specific) objectives of phenomenology enabled similar narrative structures to emerge, without reducing the unique life experiences of each study participant. The life narratives follow a similar line-up of paragraph headings, which indicate the similarities of narrative sites, actors, scripts, plots and temporalities that emerged across biographies, but include references that define each narrative for its unique theme within paragraphs and in the title of each chapter (Chapters 6-9); therefore, for instance, Thabelo struggles with anger, Dawie with fear, Aletta with shame and Lerato with belonging. I also built the student voice into the study by describing the post-Reitz interventions in a separate narrative account. I constructed this account in the main from university records and media reports, but only including those interventions the participants referenced as events that affected their shifts in racial knowledge and identity.

I introduce the account of post-Reitz interventions as part of the stories of change of the dissertation, because the account verifies the authenticity of the student voice on important events in the following chapters, but also as the account represents a story of institutional change on campus. The post-Reitz and life history accounts (Chapters 5-9) represent original voices and provide original narrative data for research, especially so since the study participant co-authored the accounts of their experiences and served as co-researchers in developing bridge-building as framework for sense making. I followed an *iterative* process of re-writing and re-reading with the students to ensure authenticity of their biographies. I then inductively refined the meanings participants assigned to their experiences and abductively inferred underlying conceptual structures with the thematic analysis and synthesis of critical incidents. The *inductive* reading of the narratives revealed grounded observations of their life trajectories with racial knowledge and identity. I used *abductive* reasoning to theorise my findings and build theoretical perspectives that explain the incidents reflected in the student life histories.

In order to ground my theorising of the research findings in current scholarship, but make original contributions to the field, I developed a framework of concepts (Chapter 4) as interpretative landscape for the study. These included, amongst others, the Freirean notions of humanisation and conscientisation, the Lacanian distinctions of the symbolic, imaginative and reality and the notions of hybridity and in-betweenness of Bhabha. I draw on the Winnicottean concept of transitionality, the Girardean analysis of scapegoating, Mill's epistemology of ignorance, the notions of nearness and embrace of Jansen and Volf and Boske's definition of school leadership as agency to build bridges.

The framework of concepts enabled an interpretation of the narrative data of the study that is aligned with established theoretical scholarship on the social, cultural, political and education modalities of lived experience and real lifeworlds.

However, the study offers an original contribution by applying, establishing new connections between and developing new structures of meaning among the concepts to describe and explain the phenomenon of students leading racial reconciliation. I used established concepts to describe the shifts from ignorance to consciousness and to bridge-building in the lives of the four student leaders, and then theorised the process as a struggle between the epistemologies of ignorance and transitionality.

Limitations

The limitations of the study relate to the originality of the research problem and the phenomenological methodology of the study. Originality of a study becomes problematic when the research drifts away from and does not show a clear engagement and continue current scholarship in the field. This may cause the research to have low transferability and no scholarly validity, which is especially true in studies where little or no current literature is available on the particular research problem and questions of the study, as is the case here.

I resolved this limitation by completing a thorough literature review of prominent fields of scholarship relevant to the key concepts of my research problem, namely literature that engages the themes of student leadership, racial knowledge and identities, and racial reconciliation on university campuses.

I reviewed literature on student engagement, student leadership and student diversity and developed a methodology to organise the vast amount of combined scholarship in these fields, as well as to determine areas of limited research that relate to my study. I surveyed student engagement scholarship and reviewed studies on student voice and agency, student movements and student governance.

I surveyed literature on student leadership and reviewed studies on student orientations to and attitudes about leadership and citizenship, on leadership practices of students and on prominent models and programmes for student development for socially responsible leadership. However, the focus on this study on racial knowledge and identity directed the largest portion of the literature review to engage current scholarship on student diversity.

I also reviewed literature on the different theoretical approaches to the study of race and racial knowledge and identity in education and on the theories of associated with different approaches. I surveyed scholarship on student racial performativity by reviewing literature on student racial attitudes, identities and behaviours.

I surveyed scholarship on student racial lifeworlds by reviewing literature on the sites, actors and discourses of students' racial experience. I surveyed scholarship on alternative student knowledge and identities by reviewing literature on multi-raciality and identity ambiguities.

The study also resolved the risk of distance from current scholarship by developing a framework of relevant concepts as a multidisciplinary landscape to guide my analysis and interpretation of the data. I engaged concepts from the educational scholarship of Freire, Jansen and Boske, Volf's theological work on reconciliation, the cultural studies of Bhabha and Girard and the psychoanalytic work of Lacan and Winnicott. I developed and theorised the findings of the study by drawing on and refining these concepts from established scholarship.

The limitations of the study that result from the research methodologies come from the relational nature of the research, the proximity of researcher and participant and the particular requirements for validity of phenomenological research. The positioning of the study as a qualitative project of insider-research faces the risk of researcher bias and hubris, which may have a negative impact the authenticity of the data, the validity of the analysis and the transferability of findings. Simply put, the beliefs of the researcher may influence the research design, collection and analysis of the data and the formulation of theoretical perspectives regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The subjectivity of the researcher engaged in the relational encounter of familiar study participants is a limitation to the study.

I resolved this limitation with researcher reflexivity during the research process and bracketing, verification and horizontalisation during the collection, analyses and interpretation of the data. However, I also leveraged the relational dynamics of the research and employed the subjectivities of the researcher and participants for the benefit of the research – the relationships of trust between the researcher and participants ensured richer data to describe the lived experience and lifeworlds of the students.

Moreover, the participants were involved as co-researchers and contributed to, as well as approved the final accounts of their life histories as data for analysis. During the final round of interviews, they also commented on bridge-building as potential framework to make sense their experiences of the phenomenon of change leadership, so that the subjectivities of the researcher and participants contributed to the authenticity of the data, rather than remaining a threat to the research.

The validity of knowledge claims in phenomenological research depends on the plausibility and trustworthiness. Such claims are plausible when the relationship between the data and analyses clearly emerges and its interpretation is compelling and convincing.

Knowledge claims are trustworthy when the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data follow rigorous techniques to ensure its authenticity and the interpretation of the data is conceptually grounded in established scholarship. In addition to co-authoring the life narratives with the study participants, I ensure trustworthiness of the data by quoting `from participant interviews and continuously referencing relevant critical incidents as evidence for my analyses and interpretations. I ensure the plausibility of my interpretations by using the framework of concepts as the taxonomy of terms I draw on in analyses and by linking critical incidents from the participant life histories directly to my theorising of the findings of the study.

However, the transferability of the findings provides the most important argument for further research as recommendation of the study.

Recommendations

The objectives of this study were to describe and make sense of the phenomenon of student leadership for racial reconciliation and change at a university campus. This means that the transferability of the study consists of the general descriptions and interpretations of the phenomenon and the illustration of how it plays out in the lives of the study participants. The purpose of phenomenological research is not firstly to apply its findings to different situations or similar cases, but to offer rich descriptions that open new ways of understanding.

As I argue above, this study succeeds with original descriptions of the lived experiences and lifeworlds of student leaders engaged in racial reconciliation, and with plausible interpretations that continue current scholarship on themes of change leadership. However, this study does not offer data or analysis to generalise its findings for application elsewhere as a model of change leadership, even though the study theorised a process of change through incidents of reprisal and embrace, and developed a metatheoretical reading of in-betweenness and transitionality.

For this reason, in addition to the potential areas of further research I discussed above (Chapter 11), this study also indicates that quantitative research that verifies the applicability of bridge-building as theory of change and transitionality as its foundational epistemology, represent an important next step to continue the line of inquiry opened by this research.

END

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Ethical Clearance Certificate (UFS-EDU-2015-005)

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS·UV EDUCATION OPVOEDKUNDE

Faculty of Education
Ethics Office

2015-04-16

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION:

A phenomenological reading of the racial knowledge and identities of student leaders engaged in reconciliation

Dear Mr Buys

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-2015-005

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year 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,

Christa Duvenhage
Faculty Ethics Officer

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Appendix II: Copy of Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM
PhD-study, School of Higher Education, University of the Free State

Dear [Participant]

Thank you for participating in this study. Please find here a consent form to indicate your agreement to participate in the study and its protocols for confidentiality of your information and identity.

Please read the following sections thoroughly and sign the document at the end.

Please kindly submit the signed consent form with your comments after reviewing the life narrative hereto attached.

Kind regards

Rudi Buys
Researcher, March 2015

1. Verbal and written consent

This form confirms that you already verbally agreed to participate in the study, and indicated your understanding of its aims, methods and outcomes, as was voice recorded in our first one-on-one meeting.

The written consent supports your verbal agreement by requesting your signature specifically *after you have reviewed* the write-up of your experiences by the researcher – his version of your life story with race and racism as you described during the confidential interviews of the study.

This is important so that you are comfortable with your life story as published as part of the outcomes of the research – an additional measure to ensure the integrity of the research and your protection as participant.

2. Confidentiality and security

Your name and biographical details that may identify you either are deleted from or coded with a pseudo-name in the transcripts of your interviews and in all documents and materials of the study, as well as in the final dissertation and other publications of the project. All the voice recordings, transcripts and other documents of the project are kept confidential and secure with passwords and access owned only by the researcher.

3. Participant selection

As also discussed with you in person, this study wants to make sense of the extraordinary achievements for reconciliation students achieved on campus after the Reitz incident of 2007/2008. This it wants to do by talking to student leaders who played an important role in the process of reconciliation. You were identified as such a leader, which means that your experiences and what you learned in this process may help universities to better understand how to deal with racial conflict and transformation on campuses.

4. Scope of the study

The study is conducted as part of a doctoral degree in higher education studies at the University of the Free State. It aims to understand the impact of intergenerational racial knowledge and identity for institutional transformation in higher education better. Its findings will be published as a doctoral dissertation and in other academic publications such as journal articles or books, and may be presented at conferences.

5. Benefits and risks of participation

Your participation in this study offers you the benefit to reflect on your experience as student leader during the process of transformation on campus, but also personally on your experiences with race since childhood and how you now make sense of these incidents in your life and their impact on who you are. For this reason the interviews follow an informal and unstructured style where you have the freedom to share the memories and stories you feel comfortable with, while the researcher will not comment or discuss them with you, but only ask more questions to assist your story-telling.

The only possible risks for participants in the study are possible emotional distress that you may feel when sharing difficult memories during the interviews and possible embarrassment if your identity or confidential information may be comprised in the published findings of the study.

As confirmed earlier, to avoid these risks, a clinical psychologist was appointed to offer you additional support if you feel any emotional discomfort during the interviews or even if you feel the need to continue a therapeutic process following the interviews. In addition, all the information obtained during this study will remain confidential and your details and identity will not be released to anyone. All data and material are kept secure.

6. Voluntary participation and participant activities

This form also confirms that your participation is voluntary and that you are free to raise any concerns regarding the project with the researcher at any time, or with the clinical psychologist appointed to offer you additional support during the time of the interviews.

As participant, you agreed to participate in unstructured, hour-long and sound-recorded interviews with the researcher that focus on and invite you to relate your personal experiences and perspectives of race and racism prior to and on campus. During your last interview you may also be asked to comment on how the researcher makes sense of experiences or to prepare additional notes to help the researcher interpret and write up your story – to be a co-reader of the research.

7. Declaration of Participant

Your signature declares your informed consent and voluntary participation, as well as confirms you reviewed and accept the anonymous description of your experiences as related during the interviews.

8. Researchers and project schedule

The study is done by Mr Barend Rudolf (Rudi) Buys as researcher and supervised by Professors Jonathan Jansen and Rita Niemann of the University of the Free State. The five-year study interviews participants in its second year, 2012, and will during its final year when drafting the dissertation for submission for degree purposes, again approach participants to review their life narratives contained therein, and provide final written consent.

PARTICIPANT DECLARATION OF INFORMED CONSENT			
I hereby confirm my verbal agreement to participate in the study, as recorded in my first and final interviews, and that I am fully informed about and aware of the research project as a whole and my right to withdraw at any time prior to and during the interviews. I confirm my voluntarily participation and accept as sufficient the measures taken to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of my information and identity. I confirm that I have read and understand this document, was given the opportunity to ask questions regarding these procedures, and confirm that I can raise any questions regarding the research project with the researcher at any time. I herewith confirm that I have reviewed the life narrative of my experiences drafted for publication as part of the research project and consent to its use, following any content changes made as I may have requested, but allowing for editing changes in its final version. I hereby give permission that the School of Higher Education makes use of the results of the study for research purposes, on condition that the confidentiality of the data is maintained. I grant this as a voluntary contribution in the interest of training and knowledge.			
Participant signature			
Full name	Signature	Student nr. (2012)	Date
Researcher signature			
I confirm adherence to all protocols required for and here indicated as part of the project.			
Barend Rudolf Buys		0863634	
Full name		Staff nr.	Date

For office use				
Sent to participant	Feedback received			Signed (researcher)
	Signed consent form	Yes	No	
	Review comments	Yes	No	
	Reasons, if no:			
Date	Date			Date