Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

EXPLORING THE SOCIAL MOBILITY EXPERIENCES OF BLACK AFRICANS IN MIDDLE-CLASS OCCUPATIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. In post-apartheid South Africa, the persistent question is why black Africans continue to be a minority in middle-class occupations when overt racial barriers have been removed. Scholars indicate that explanations regarding the social mobility trajectories of black Africans tend to ignore that there are social class differences in black African communities. This study used a Bourdieusian Approach to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans raised middle-class and black Africans raised working-class who are currently employed in middle-class occupations.

The study adopted a qualitative approach with data being collected through life history interviews and analyzed using narrative analysis. The key findings of this study are that exposure to different social class contexts and other societal hierarchies influenced the social mobility experiences of research participants in the current study. The study further found that workplaces that were dominated by black Africans had gendered hierarchies whereas workplaces dominated by white South Africans had racialised hierarchies. The hierarchies in black African-dominated organizations were mostly maintained at a personal level and gatekeepers in organizations dominated by white people mainly used HR practices to maintain hierarchies. The study further found that research participants advanced or maintained their positions in the workplace by increasing their capital, acquiring the dispositions required in a context or by moving between organizations.

Keywords: Black Africans, Bourdieu, Social mobility, Social class, Middle-class occupations, post-apartheid South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

South Africa has one of the most economically unequal societies in the world (World Bank, 2018). According to the World Bank (2018), labour market incomes were the main contributor to economic inequality in South Africa between 2006 and 2015. Labour market incomes accounted for more than 90 per cent of the overall Gini coefficient in that period (World Bank, 2018). This is because South Africa has a dual economy with a small number of individuals working in highly-skilled jobs and a majority working in low-skilled jobs (World Bank, 2018). According to Makgetla (2020), addressing income inequality in South Africa requires increasing employment levels and closing the large wage gap between those who are employed in the highly skilled and low-skilled labour markets. Makgetla (2020) further argues that if employment levels were increased without wage differentials being addressed, income inequality would persist in the country.

Employees who work in highly skilled jobs in South Africa make up less than a fifth of the total working population but they earn approximately five times the average wages of those working in low-skilled jobs (World Bank, 2018). The wages of the top ten per cent (10%) of employees working full-time in 2015 were on average eighty-two (82) times more than the wages of the bottom ten per cent (10%) (Francis & Massie, 2018). The wages of the best-paid

one per cent (1%) in 2017 made up twenty per cent (20%) of all wage income whilst the wages of the bottom fifty per cent (50%) made up twelve and a half per cent (12, 5%) of the total wage income (Makgetla, 2020). South African executives were also the seventh best-paid executives in the world in 2016 with a median salary of approximately R5, 2 million a year (Francis & Massie, 2018; Makgetla, 2020). The median salary of employees in the same year was approximately R50 000 a year (Makgetla, 2020).

Income inequality in South Africa is also racialised (Francis & Massie, 2018; Makgetla, 2020). Nationally, white South Africans make up ten per cent (10%) of the economically active population and they form sixty-five per cent (65%) of top management, fifty-three per cent (53%) of senior management and thirty-two per cent (32%) of the professionally qualified group (Commission for Employment Equity, 2021). Black Africans, on the other hand, make up seventy-nine per cent (79%) of the economically active population in South Africa (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019). At a national level, black Africans form sixteen per cent (16%) of the top management, twenty-five per cent (25%) of the senior management and thirty-two per cent (32%) of the professionally qualified population groups (Commission for Employment Equity, 2021).

The private sector in South Africa employs approximately seventy-three per cent (73%) of the total workforce in the country whilst the public service sector employs about nineteen (19%) of the total workforce (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019). The top structures in the private sector are dominated by white South Africans whilst the top structures in the public service sector are dominated by black Africans (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019).

Table 1: Black Africans in middle-class occupations private vs public service sector.

Black Africans	Public service sector	Private Sector
Top Management	76%	12%
Senior Management	71%	17%
Professionally qualified	65%	30%

Source: Commission for Employment Equity (2019)

Black Africans further make up a majority of those who occupy low positions both in the private and public service sectors (Commission for Employment Equity, 2021). According to Makgetla (2020), approximately forty per cent (40%) of top- paid employees in 2017 were managers and high-level professionals. As white South Africans occupy most of these top-level positions, they earn on average three times the average wages of black Africans (World Bank, 2018).

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Makgetla (2020) states that the persistent question in South Africa is why is it that only a minority of black Africans have accessed higher positions in post-apartheid South Africa when overt racial barriers have been eliminated. Dominant narratives in the country propagate the idea that the presence of black Africans in middle-class occupations is a post-apartheid phenomenon that can be attributed to Affirmative Action legislation (Mabandla, 2015), corruption (Madonsela, 2018) or black empowerment initiatives (Iqani, 2017). These narratives further disseminate the idea that all black Africans belonged to the working class during the apartheid era (Khunou, 2015). South African sociologists argue that the social mobility trajectories of black Africans are not well understood as the social class of origin of

black Africans tends to be homogenized in most discussions (Chipkin, 2012; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015). Thus, insufficient attention has been paid to how social class influences the social mobility experiences of this group (Chipkin, 2012; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015). This study aims to address this gap by exploring the social class mobility experiences of black Africans raised working class and middle class who are employed in middle-class occupations.

1.3. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The current study aims to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. Firstly, the study plans to understand whether there are differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school. Secondly, the study will explore whether there are differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations who are employed in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations. Lastly, the study will identify the strategies that black Africans have employed to advance their upward career mobility or maintain their position in the workplace.

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

- To study the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school.

- To explore the differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations who are employed in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations?
- To identify strategies that black Africans in middle-class occupations have deployed to facilitate their upward career mobility or to maintain their position in the workplace?

The study will aim to answer the following research questions:

- What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school?
- What are the differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations who are employed in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations?
- What strategies have black Africans in middle-class occupations deployed to facilitate their upward career mobility or to maintain their position in the workplace?

1.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.5.1. Bourdieusian Approach

This study will explore the social mobility of black Africans in middle-class occupations using a Bourdieusian Approach. Pierre Bourdieu conceptualised this approach in 1971 to explain how social inequality is transmitted across generations in different social settings (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). This theoretical perspective uses the concepts of field (context),

capital and habitus to explain the intergenerational transmission of privilege and disadvantage (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). A field is an objective social space that has rules and regulations, interactions that are ordered and this context also offers a platform where events and transactions can take place (Thomson, 2014). Players in the field occupy subordinate or dominant positions based on the volume and composition of their capital (Barrett, 2015; Calhoun, 2003; Schubert, 2014).

Capital can be delineated into economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital is the financial resources that individuals use to access goods and services (Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). This capital can be converted into money or institutionalized through property rights (Bourdieu, 1986). Economic capital is also the root capital that can be transformed into other forms of capital and it influences the likelihood of individuals experiencing lives that are characterised by material abundance or scarcity (Bourdieu, 1986; Piff et al., 2018). Social capital is membership in groups that enable individuals to access capital that is owned by others and cultural capital is knowledge of implicit and explicit standards that are used in different social institutions (Bourdieu, 1986; Collier & Morgan, 2007; Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Moore (2014) states that symbolic capital accrues when one social group is regarded as more competent resulting in that group having a social advantage when compared to other groups

Fields also have formal and informal rules that are used to evaluate what it means to be a good and competent person (Stephens et al., 2014). Requirements in the field shape normative culture-specific selves that are socialized in a context (Stephens et al., 2014). According to Edgerton and Roberts (2014, p. 195), habitus is a "learned set of preferences or dispositions by which a person orients to the social world." Crossley (2014) states that

Bourdieu hypothesized that differences in habitus were closely linked to the objective positions that individuals occupied in the social space and these objective positions were based on their material conditions. The socio-psychological perspective of social class expands this viewpoint and argues that people in the bottom half of the social class divide (working-class) have different norms, values, and dispositions when compared to those in the top half of the social class divide (middle-class) (Dietze & Knowles, 2016, Kraus et al.; 2011, Stephens et al., 2014).

Working-class contexts socialize normative culture-specific selves that can be categorized as hard interdependence (Stephens et al., 2014). These culture-specific selves enable individuals in working-class contexts to navigate social environments that are unpredictable, chaotic and uncertain (Stephens et al., 2014). They also enable individuals in working-class contexts to navigate social environments that have limited resources and fewer opportunities for advancement. People in the bottom half of the social class divide learn to rely on others for assistance as they have limited influence, control and choices (Stephens et al., 2014). People in the top half of the social class divide (middle-class) are likely to navigate social environments that are characterized by material comfort, abundant resources and more control (Dietze & Knowles, 2016, Kraus et al., 2011, Stephens et al., 2014). These individuals experience the world as more certain and as a result, they can focus on expressing their needs, enacting their preferences and influencing their social environments (Stephens et al., 2014). People in the top half of the social class divide also have multiple opportunities for advancement and they tend to occupy dominant positions in social hierarchies (Stephens et al., 2014). The normative culture-specific selves that emerge in middle-class contexts can be categorized as expressive independence (Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014).

Habitus is a subjective concept that explains the disposition of individuals and it is structured as it is based on past and present experiences (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). Habitus is also structuring because it influences future choices (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). A field is an objective relational and hierarchichal structure with set capital requirements (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). Fields are not level and they present unequal opportunities and constraints to players (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). Players in the field devise strategies to facilitate their mobility in a social environment (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). Strategies are an individual's conscious and unconscious responses to constraints and opportunities in the social environment (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). Thus, social mobility involves an interplay between objective and subjective structures (Maton, 2008).

There are different matches and mistmatches between the subjective structures of individuals and objective structures in a field (Maton, 2008). Individuals who do not meet the capital requirements in the field or who are not equipped with the dispositions required in the field can choose to exit the field, challenge hierarchies in the field or acquire the dispositions or capital required in that field (Barrett, 2015; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). Some individuals might also choose not to enter a field because they believe that people like them do not succeed in that context (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). For example, there are students from working-class contexts who do not apply to prestigious colleges because they do not believe that they will fit in (Piff et al., 2018).

Fields also change over time and the capital requirements in most fields evolve (Hardy, 2014). According to Hardy (2014), Bourdieu introduced the idea of a hysteresis effect to explain that when a field transforms, members of subordinate groups do not have equal opportunities to participate in the transforming field. The history of a field entrenches certain

practices and members of the dominant groups will challenge efforts to change these practices (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). Members of the subordinate groups who possess the required capital or who can change the configuration of their capital easily will be the first to access newly available opportunities in transforming fields (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). Most members of subordinate groups will remain disadvantaged as the process of accumulating capital takes time and they are likely to enter the transforming field when returns have diminished (Hardy, 2014).

1.5.2. Social Class Culture Cycles

Stephens et al. (2014) argue that the gateway contexts (fields) of home, school and work that are located in different sociocultural contexts provide members of society with different material conditions and disproportionate access to valued opportunities. Individuals who experience material scarcity live in a world that is more uncertain when compared to those who have abundant material resources (Lott, 2012; Piff et al., 2018). Stephens et al. (2014) further argue that the gateway contexts of home, school and work cannot be understood outside of the national context that they are located. Different countries have unique cultural ideals that promote distinct normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns (Stephens et al., 2014). Thus, normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns of individuals are influenced by requirements in different sociocultural and national contexts (Stephens et al., 2014).

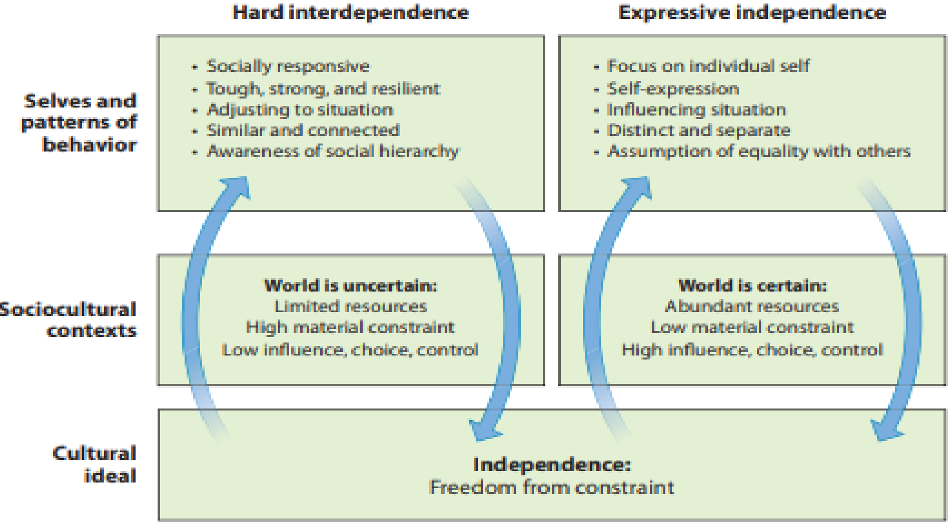

Figure 1: US American social class culture cycles (Stephens et al. , 2014, p.614)

1.5.2.1. National Context

Markus and Stephens (2017) state that sources of inequality in different societies are based on historical, political and economic structures that are linked to those societies. Different countries offer dissimilar structural opportunities and barriers to social mobility. Crul et al. (2017b) performed a comparative study on the mobility trajectories of second-generation immigrants working in Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands. Crul et al. (2017b) found that the national context of different countries influenced the accessibility of opportunities in different gateway contexts. For example, children of immigrants from working-class backgrounds had higher probabilities of attaining higher education in Sweden than in Germany (Crul et al., 2017b).

Paisey et al. (2020) also state that the United Kingdom government launched a social mobility strategy in 2011 that aimed to improve the intergenerational mobility of individuals from working-class backgrounds. Wainwright and Watts (2019) mention that there has been

an increase in the number of working-class students enrolled in higher education. Paisey et al (2020), however, point out that structures of privilege have remained intact and increased opportunities for children from working-class backgrounds have been at the expense of children whose parents are semi-professionals (e.g. nurses and teachers). Zhou et al. (2008) further explain that laws surrounding citizenship rights in different countries affect the life opportunities of children of immigrants differently. Thus, government policies have the potential to facilitate or hinder the upward mobility of different social groups in valued gateway contexts (Crul et al., 2012; Paisey et al., 2020).

According to Modisha (2008), South Africa underwent a triple transition in 1994-political democracy, economic liberalisation and deracialization of society. During the apartheid era, black Africans were relegated to a lower position on the race hierarchy and their educational, occupational and income-generating opportunities were restricted (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). The political transformation that took place in South Africa removed explicit racial laws that used to hinder the social mobility of black Africans and provided black Africans with increased opportunities (Iqani, 2017; Modisha, 2008; Wale, 2013). Visagie (2015) estimates that 2.7 million black Africans entered the middle class in the post-apartheid era. Southall (2016), however, argues that there are no official statistics that confirm the size of the new black African middle-class versus the established black African middle-class that existed during the apartheid era. Southall (2016) nevertheless agrees that the black African middle-class grew in post-apartheid South Africa. Black Africans, though, continue to be overrepresented in the population groups that are economically disadvantaged and they also have lower probabilities of experiencing upward social mobility(World Bank, 2018).

Black Africans who were beneficiaries of reforms that the apartheid government initiated in the 1980s disproportionally benefitted from social mobility opportunities that became available in post-apartheid South Africa (Chipkin, 2012). Black Africans who were already highly educated during the early years of the political transformation were also better placed to take advantage of social mobility opportunities that became available in the post-apartheid era (Moses et al., 2017). Mbeki (2007) further indicates that black Africans who were part of the upper black African middle class during the apartheid era were also better positioned to benefit from newly available opportunities.

1.5.2.2. Home Context

Social class is a hierarchical and relational structure that provides members of society with different lived experiences (Lott, 2012; Piff et al., 2018). Families that have high levels of economic capital are likely to experience lives that are characterised by material abundance, fewer restrictions to access social mobility opportunities and these families tend to live in safe neighbourhoods (Bourdieu, 1986; Piff et al., 2018). Families with limited economic capital tend to live in environments that have limited resources and they also experience more structural barriers that hinder their upward mobility (Bourdieu, 1986; Piff et al., 2018). Families with high levels of economic capital are also likely to have social networks that assist in facilitating their upward social mobility (Paisey et al., 2020). According to Markus and Stephens (2017), networks of middle-class individuals tend to be large and extensive and they include influential people from diverse social spheres. In contrast, networks of members of the working class are small and comprise people from the same social class (Markus & Stephens, 2017). Piff et al. (2018) argue that individuals with low economic capital have a lower probability of accessing resources and opportunity-rich networks as they are likely to

attend less affluent educational institutions, live in poor neighbourhoods and have limited access to social gatherings and clubs of affluent people.

The economic capital of a family further influences how long individuals can defer joining the world of work (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, Msibi (2019) found that some participants in her study due to financial constraints based their career choices on the length of time it would take them to complete their qualifications. Van der Putten (2001) further mentions that students from working-class backgrounds sometimes choose courses based on the prices of the required textbooks and academic majors based on the prospects for employment after graduation. Diamond and Gomez (2004) also found that the economic capital of middle-class African-American parents enabled them to select schools that were likely to facilitate the social mobility of their children. Working-class parents in the same study had fewer choices and their children attended schools that were assigned to them (Diamond & Gomez, 2004). Families further socialize children to enact culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour that are valued in a social class context (Stephens et al., 2014). Stephens et al. (2015) argue that middle-class institutions value independent normative culture-specific selves. Thus, children who are raised in middle-class contexts are likely to understand implicit and explicit standards that are used in middle-class institutions (Collier & Morgan, 2007; Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Children who are raised in middle-class context are also likely to embody the cultural capital valued in these contexts through status markers such as their tastes, hobbies and language competence (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) argues that individuals who can display the cultural capital valued in a context are likely to be perceived as more competent than those who do not possess this capital. As cultural capital takes time to accumulate, those who have early exposure to evaluation standards and status signals used in

a context have a social advantage over individuals who did not have this early exposure (Bourdieu, 1986).

Studies conducted in the United Kingdom indicate that individuals who have attended private schools, have parents who hold degrees, or parents who were employed in professional or managerial positions, are likely to occupy senior positions in the workplace (Clarke, 2018; Newton, 2017). The Social Mobility Commission in the United Kingdom further found that there was an average wage disparity of £6,800 between professionals from working-class backgrounds and professionals from higher classes who were regarded as posh (Clarke, 2018). Williams et al. (2018) also state that over fifty per cent (50%) of Harvard students come from families in the top ten per cent (10%) of household incomes. Students from Harvard are also more likely to work for elite organizations as these organizations prefer students from Ivy League schools (Williams et al., 2018).

In independent contexts, parents and guardians are mainly responsible for providing valued life opportunities (Manstead, 2018, Stephens et al., 2014). In interdependent contexts, members of the extended family can also play different roles in providing valued capital and opportunities to children (Rezai, 2017). Approximately sixty-six per cent (66%) of black Africans do not live in nuclear families (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Hofmeyr, 2018; Mncanca, et al., 2016). Black African families are a collection of female-headed households with fathers not living in the home, child-headed households with both parents absent, households headed by grandmothers and households that are made up of three generations living in the same home (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Hofmeyr, 2018). Mncanca et al. (2016) mention that from an African perspective; fatherhood and motherhood are not defined in terms of biological parents. Different family members can step in and take up those roles when

required (Kapp et al., 2014; Mncanca et al., 2016). According to Rezai (2017), it is more valuable for researchers to understand the types of capital or support offered by different family members when studying social mobility in interdependent contexts.

Studies exploring the social mobility of first or second generation immigrants from working-class backgrounds found that parents offered emotional and financial support to their children as they had no experience in how to navigate middle-class contexts (Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Rezai, 2019; Yagbasan, 2019; Zhou et al., 2008). These parents encouraged their children to focus on their education by highlighting how the country they were in had increased opportunities for upward mobility and by pointing out that they worked arduous jobs with low pay because they were not educated (Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Rezai, 2019; Yagbasan, 2019; Zhou et al., 2008). These parents further communicated to their children that they believed that they would achieve upward mobility and they showed interest in their school work (Crul et al., 2017a; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Rezai, 2019; Yagbasan, 2019; Zhou et al., 2008).

Educated siblings and relatives supplemented the support offered by parents by providing information on how to navigate middle-class gateway contexts, assisting with homework, utilizing their social capital to create opportunities for their kin and by advocating for their kin in valued gateway contexts (Crul et al., 2017a; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Rezai, 2019; Yagbasan, 2019; Zhou et al., 2008). Educated siblings and relatives also served as role models and their pronouncements that their siblings or relatives would finish higher education carried more weight as they had managed to succeed in that context themselves (Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Rezai, 2019; Wainwright & Watts, 2019; Yagbasan, 2019; Zhou et al., 2008). Children who had middle-class friends who were

native citizens also got an opportunity to understand the norms of the foreign country at an early age, observe middle-class parents and access informational support from these parents (Crul et al., 2017a; Rezai, 2019).

1.5.2.2. School Context

The school context is an objective social space with rules and regulations where ordered interactions, events and transactions take place (Thomson, 2014). Schools occupy different positions in the field of education and they provide their students with different probabilities of entering middle-class occupations (Collier & Morgan, 2007; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Stephens et al., 2014). The position of the school in the educational system legitimates differences in what students are expected to achieve in the future (Schubert, 2014). According to Stephens et al. (2014), schools in low-income communities tend to provide their students with lower probabilities of entering middle-class occupations when compared with middle-class schools. In South Africa, black Africans are more likely to attend historically underfunded schools that are based in working-class contexts (Spaull, 2013). Most quality schools in the country are located in historically white and Indian areas and they charge exorbitant fees (Moses et al., 2017; Van der Berg et al., 2011).

Schools also have hierarchies that are socially and historically produced with participants perceiving these hierarchies as a natural order of how the school context should be organized (Deer, 2014; Markus & Stephens, 2017). Hierarchies in the school system are further reproduced when participants such as parents, students and school authorities perceive them to be legitimate and misrecognize that they are arbitrary (Schubert, 2014). Social order is

maintained in schools through institutionalised norms that promote specific patterns of behaviour and culture-specific selves (Stephens et al., 2014). Parents and students who can understand and respond appropriately to norms promoted in a school have a higher probability of accessing better educational outcomes as school authorities perceive these parents and students to be cooperative (Collier & Morgan, 2007; Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Lareau & Weininger, 2003).

School authorities have symbolic power to impose their way of being as the only legitimate way of thinking, feeling and acting in this context (Barrett, 2015; Calhoun, 2003; Schubert, 2014). Students who do not conform to norms in the school system violate the natural order of how things are in a school (Rawls, 1987). These students disrupt the predictability and stability of social interactions within a school system (Deer, 2014). School authorities use gentle violence or imperceptible instruments of power –symbolic violence-to encourage these students to cooperate (Barrett, 2015; Calhoun, 2003; Schubert, 2014). Students who do not respond appropriately to norms promoted in a school are also likely to be labelled as intellectually or socially inferior (Schubert, 2014). Teachers reinforce these labels by giving good students attention, approval and support whilst bad students are often marginalized (Hunter, 2004). Some students from working-class backgrounds who were regarded as good students were validated by their teachers who gave them confidence that they could succeed in the educational sector (Rezai, 2017; Yagasan, 2019). Kapp et al. (2014) also found that teachers put more effort into black African students that they perceived as good students. Teacher support sometimes supplemented the educational support that passive parents did not offer (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, Kapp et al, 2014; Rezai, 2017; Yagasan, 2019).

1.5.2.3. Higher Education Context

Investment in tertiary education offers high returns in South Africa as those who have attained education beyond Grade 12 have a higher probability of being employed in the skilled sector of the economy (Makgetla, 2020; Moses et al., 2017, World Bank, 2018). According to the World Bank (2018), tertiary education increases the likelihood of income mobility by forty per cent (40%) in South Africa. Phillips et al. (2020b) further state that tertiary institutions have the potential to expose students to normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour valued in middle-class contexts. Studies indicate that students who come from interdependent contexts adapt to independent models of competence used to evaluate students in this context differently (Phillips et al., 2020b). Some students still choose to retain interdependent models of competence even when they have been exposed to independent models of competence (Phillips et al., 2020b).

Local and international studies support the assertion that certain levels of economic and cultural capital are required to access and successfully attain tertiary education (Andestad, 2018; Azmitia et al., 2018; Coles, 2020; Collier & Morgan, 2007; Kessi and Cornell, 2015; Kiguwa, 2014; Van der Putten 2001). Students whose parents did not attain tertiary education and who come from working-class backgrounds are less likely to attain college degrees (Phillips et al., 2020b; Townsend and Troung, 2017). According to Moses et al. (2017), only one per cent (1%) of students from very poor schools in South Africa achieve their tertiary qualifications within six years after passing matric. Townsend and Troung (2017) further state that individuals from working-class backgrounds, if they attend universities, are more likely to attend lower-status universities that are not well-regarded in the labour market.

Studies on the experiences of black students in university settings further indicate that these students have low symbolic capital in this context and they are regarded as having low levels of competence (Gray et al., 2018; Kamper & Steyn, 2011; Kapp et al, 2014; Kessi & Cornell, 2015). In South Africa, black African students are stereotyped as individuals who struggle academically and financially, who are not adequately prepared for the academic world by the schooling system and also as people who struggle to speak and write English (Kapp et al., 2014; Kessi & Cornell, 2015; Kiguwa, 2014; Fataar, 2018; Smit, 2012; Soudien, 2008).

Wacquant (2006) states that fields are areas of struggle and some institutions seek to change the distribution of capital and opportunities within a field. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), for example, assists South African students from working-class backgrounds to access higher education (Bhorat et al., 2018). The number of black Africans who have accessed higher education has increased exponentially after the inception of this scheme (Bhorat et al., 2018). Furthermore, there are private companies in South Africa that assist working-class students to fund their tertiary education (Andestad, 2018). Moreover, most South African universities have initiated Academic Development Programmes that assist students from disadvantaged backgrounds to bridge the gap between low-performing schools and universities (Kamper & Steyn, 2011; Kiguwa, 2014). There are also community projects that provide extra classes and tutoring to assist working-class students to navigate the university system (Azmitia et al., 2018; Kapp et al., 2014).

Several upwardly mobile individuals from working-class backgrounds were also supported by university professors or lecturers who expressed confidence in their educational abilities (Rezai, 2017; Yagasan, 2019). Members of the academic staff further enhanced the cultural capital of working-class students by sharing their social mobility experiences (Van der

Putten, 2001). Working-class students also managed the costs of higher education through part-time employment and/or enrolling in distance learning institutions (Castle, 1996; Coles, 2020; Paisey et al., 2020; Zhou et al.,2008). Students who were raised in working-class homes or who were racial minorities also relied on the emotional support of peers from similar backgrounds to cope with experiences of micro-aggressions and feelings of not fitting in (Azmitia et al., 2018; Gray et al.,2018).

1.5.2.3. Work Context

Workplaces are structured in such a manner that there are few people at the top and a large number of people at the bottom (Piff et al., 2018). People in the workplace occupy subordinate or dominant positions based on the volume and composition of their capital (Barrett, 2015; Calhoun, 2003; Schubert, 2014). Gatekeepers in the work context set capital requirements that maintain their elevated position and these capital requirements evolve as members of subordinate groups start meeting them (Maton, 2008; Thomson, 2014). Workplaces also have different standards on what it means to be a good and competent employee (Stephens et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2015). The standards of competence in middle-class work contexts are aligned to normative culture-specific selves of expressive independence (Stephens et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2015; Townsend & Troung, 2017).

According to Townsend and Troung (2017), people access middle-class occupations having gone through home and school contexts located in either middle-class or working-class contexts. People who have gone through similar home and school contexts as gatekeepers are likely to share the same understanding with these gatekeepers of what makes a person a good or competent employee (Townsend &Troung, 2017). In South Africa, most gatekeepers are

white as members of this race group occupy most of the senior positions in South African workplaces (World Bank, 2018). Posel (2001) argues that South Africans see race as a common-sense categorization and this way of perceiving the world has persisted into the post-apartheid era. Most interracial contact in South Africa takes place in formal settings such as the workplace and educational settings (Crankshaw, 2017; Foster & Wale, 2017). However, South Africans still choose to racially segregate when in informal settings even though there are no laws that force them to do so (Foster & Wale, 2017; Posel, 2001).

Foster and Wale (2017) further state that black Africans from working-class contexts seldom interact with individuals outside their race group because they attend schools where there are only black Africans. These black Africans also live in areas that are geographically isolated from racially-mixed areas (Foster & Wale, 2017). South Africans who have had less contact with people from other racial or social class groups are likely to experience discomfort when interacting with those different from them (Carrim, 2012, 2019). Dlamini (2013) calls this discomfort carrying apartheid or racial baggage. Studies indicate that black Africans who have had extensive exposure to white settings- received private school or model C education, attended historically white or overseas universities, or worked overseas - were more likely to be evaluated favourably by gatekeepers in white-dominated organizations when compared to other black Africans (Dlamini, 2013; Hammond et al., 2009; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Most of these black Africans were able to connect with white gatekeepers based on shared perspectives, norms and values (Martin & Côté, 2019).

Work contexts have the potential to expose people to new normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour (Stephens et al., 2014). Martin and Côté (2019) state that individuals who have been exposed to different sociocultural contexts are likely to have

broader cultural abilities as they can understand the perspectives, norms and values of people who were raised in different sociocultural environments. Canham and Williams (2017) mention that black Africans in middle-class occupations who work in white-dominated organizations are part of a minority in their workplaces and part of a majority in the country. These black Africans are likely to have broader cultural abilities as they have more inter-racial contact than unskilled black Africans and more cross-class interactions when compared to white South Africans who mostly belong to middle-class and elite groups (Neckerman et al., 1999). Black Africans who work in white-dominated organizations also work in cultures that promote independence and some of these black Africans were socialized in black African cultures that promote interdependence (Marumo, 2013). Miyamoto (2017) hypothesized that individuals who have been exposed to different sociocultural contexts will adopt some of the normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour valued in the workplace whilst also retaining some of the norms from the sociocultural contexts they have been exposed to. Thus, it is not always the case that people at the top half of the social class hierarchy display normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour that are aligned to expressive independence and those at the bottom-half normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour aligned to hard interdependence (Brannon et al., 2017; Markus &Stephens, 2017; Martin & Côté, 2019; Miyamoto, 2017).

1.6. ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

According to Phillips et al. (2020a), socio-psychological studies on social class are still in their infancy and these studies are grounded in theories that emphasize the stability of contexts and dispositions. Phillips et al. (2020a), recommend that future socio-psychological studies on social class need to supplement current studies by moving towards a dynamic

view. This study aims to make a contribution by supplementing social class literature that is based on social class essentialism, race essentialism and undifferentiated organizational contexts.

Most socio-psychological studies on social class were conducted in the United States where social class structures are relatively static (Phillips et al., 2020a, Phillips et al., 2020b). South Africa offers a setting to study social class in a context where political democracy, economic liberalisation and the deracialization of society impacted the racial composition of social class structures (Modisha, 2008; World Bank, 2018). Miyamoto (2017) states that there is a gap in the literature regarding how societal socioeconomic changes impact the culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour of individuals who have been introduced to new cultural requirements as a result of increased economic opportunities. Furthermore, scholars indicate that black people in different parts of Africa tend to have low social class consciousness (Hellsten, 2016, Lentz, 2016; Neubert, 2016). Black people in Africa live in multi-class households and have networks that cross-cut different social class groups (Hellsten, 2016, Neubert, 2016). At times, other social identities are more important to them than class membership (Hellsten, 2016, Neubert, 2016). Historically, black Africans of different social classes were also forced to live together in townships (working-class contexts) and their lived experiences intersected (Iqani, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). According to Lentz (2016), it is challenging to apply social class theories in Africa that assume that people from different social classes have different dispositions because of living lives that rarely intersect.

Van Zyl-Hermann (2014) argues that race is overused when the experiences of South Africans are being discussed. Societal narratives that developed in post-apartheid South Africa ignored that there were black Africans who occupied middle-class occupations during

the apartheid era and also that there were working-class white people during that era (Khunou, 2015; Mabandla, 2015; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2014). The narrative of racial homogeneity was further utilized to redress racial inequality in the workplace with all black Africans categorized as previously disadvantaged (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Ruggunan et al. (2022) further argue that current academic literature generated by researchers in Human Resources Management, Industrial psychology and Management tends to essentialise race. There has been growing awareness that the experiences of members of different racial groups are not homogeneous because of social class differences (Carter-Black & Kayama, 2011; Mabandla, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Van der Putten;2001; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2014). According to Van der Putten (2001, p.16), discussions on diversity need to move away from equating the experiences of someone like "former U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice with those of an African -American female housekeeper working in a conference hotel".

The South African labour market is further characterized by dualism with the private and public service sectors having racially different top-management structures (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019). Most of the studies that have been conducted on the work experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations were in the private sector where hierarchical structures are dominated by white South Africans (Biyela, 2007; Canham & Williams, 2017; Carey, 2018; Dlamini. 2013; Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Ngoma 2016a, Weeto, 2019). Furthermore, the results of these studies reflect capital requirements and institutionalised patterns of interactions that form part of organizations that are dominated by white South Africans (Hardy, 2014). There is still a gap in the literature regarding the capital requirements in workplaces dominated by black Africans and the experiences of black Africans who work in these institutions. Studies that have taken place in

the public service sector have mostly focused on gender equality (Mokhele, 2016; Nhlapho, 2019; Nkuna, 2018).

South African workplaces provide scholars with an opportunity to study black Africans in contexts where they occupy dominant positions in organizational hierarchies and also contexts where they are members of subordinate groups. South African workplaces further provide scholars with an opportunity to study middle-class workplace contexts that might not be based on independent models of competence as cultural meaning systems of black African cultures differ from those of western cultures (Marumo, 2013; Miyamoto, 2017).

1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.7.1. Transitions

A transition takes place when a change occurs that requires individuals to psychologically adapt to a transforming environment (Zittoun, 2009). According to Quinlan et al. (2016), radical changes in social, economic and political environments may result in individuals engaging in a psychological reorientation process as their old habits no longer meet the requirements of the new environment. Social class mobility is a transition from one social class cultural environment to another environment (Martin & Côté, 2019). Social class mobility can be vertical where individuals move upwards or downwards across the social class spectrum or horizontal where socio-economic changes do not result in social class changes. (Paisey et al., 2020). Social mobility can also take place across generations (inter-generational) or within one individual's lifetime (intra-generational) (Saunders, 1990).

Social mobility also takes place over the life course of an individual and it is influenced by an intersection between structural changes, personal biography and meanings individuals make of the transition (George, 1993; Quinlan et al., 2016; Zittoun, 2009). Hence, social class transitions occur within the same contextual structures but they are also unique as individuals choose different pathways to adapt to these transitions (George, 1993; Zittoun, 2009).

1.7. 2. Social Class

According to Crossley (2014), Bourdieu avoided participating in arguments regarding how social class should be defined by hypothesizing that all individuals within a social space occupy objective positions based on their economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu argued that a group of people would qualify as a social class if they collectively identified and acted in the interest of their class (Crossley, 2014). Thus, people with equivalent volumes and composition of capital might not identify themselves as a social class but the common ecological structure that they share might enable them to have dispositions that are distinct from other groups in dissimilar ecological structures (Crossley, 2014; Phillips et al., 2020a; Piff et al., 2018). Socio-psychological studies on social class make use of socio-economic status indicators of income, educational attainment and occupational designation to determine social class (Piff et al., 2010; Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014).

According to Nzimande (1991), middle-class black Africans during the apartheid era were an eclectic group with different interests. These groups included business people, professionals in the private sector, senior government officials in homelands and townships, civil servants and state employees. Ngoma (2016a) also studied the political identity of black African professionals in post-apartheid South Africa. Ngoma (2016a) concluded that the black

African middle-class is still maturing and does not have a consolidated socio-political character. Thus, black Africans in middle-class occupations have equivalent economic and cultural capital but they are not an interest group that has solidarity.

1.7.3. Middle-Class Occupations

Occupations play a significant role in influencing the material conditions of South Africans (World Bank, 2018). The Bureau of Market Research indicates that in 2016 more than eighty per cent (80%) of South Africans in the middle class derived their income from salaries (Standard Bank, 2016). According to Stephens et al. (2014), middle-class occupations are jobs that require individuals to have attained a degree or that offer middle-class incomes or higher status in an organization's hierarchy. Post-apartheid studies on black Africans in middle-class occupations include professionals, business people who own small and medium-sized businesses, senior government officials, managers and senior managers in private companies (Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015; Ngoma, 2016a; Southall, 2004). This study only included black Africans who were employed in professional or managerial positions and who had attained tertiary qualifications.

The salary ranges below were also used as an informal guide when choosing participants to include in the study :

Table 2: Middle-class income bracket

DESCRIPTION	2020 INCOME BRACKET	NUMBER OF SOUTH AFRICANS	
Middle-Class	R264,000 - R480,000	4 million	(7%)

Upper Middle-Class	R480,001 – R900,000	2,4 Million	(4%)
Elite	R900, 001 and above	600 000	(1%)

Source: Standard Bank (2016)

Mabandla (2015) points out that occupations that were regarded as middle-class in black African communities have evolved due to changes in the socio-political context. For instance, teaching and nursing were the most common middle-class occupations for black Africans during the apartheid era (Nzimande, 1991). However, individuals occupying these occupations are regarded as semi-professionals and not included in post-apartheid studies on the black African middle class (Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015; Ngoma, 2016a; Southall, 2004). In this study, black Africans in middle-class occupations who had parents who occupied historically black African middle-class occupations were categorized as raised middle-class (Higginbotham & Weber, 1992; Nzimande, 1991). Black Africans in middle-class occupations who had parents who did not occupy historically black African middle-class occupations were categorized as raised working-class (Higginbotham & Weber, 1992).

1.8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative approach to explore the social class mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. The study was underpinned by an interpretivist research paradigm (Willis, 2012). The narrative research method was used to understand the stories that black Africans in middle-class occupations told about their social mobility experiences (Moen, 2006). These stories were collected through life history interviews and analysed using narrative analysis (Greener, 2013; Lanford et al., 2018; Shacklock & Thorp,

2005). Research participants were recruited through my networks and referrals from members of my networks (Flick, 2011).

1.9. CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

- The first chapter of the study outlines the background of the study, the rationale for undertaking the study and the theoretical framework that underpins the study. The chapter further defines key terms that were used in the study, provides an overview of the methodology that was adopted and explains the anticipated contribution that the study will make to the topic of social mobility.
- The second chapter provides an overview of historical, economic and political events that have influenced the social mobility of black Africans.
- The third chapter reviews academic literature regarding the social mobility of black Africans in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter aims to demonstrate that gateway contexts that facilitate social mobility still reproduce the same outcomes as during the apartheid era.
- The fourth chapter provides a review of the literature that discusses the strategies that members of subordinate groups have used to facilitate their career mobility in the workplace.
- The fifth chapter covers the research methodology that was used in the current study to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations.
- The sixth, seventh and eighth chapters present the results of the research.
- The ninth chapter discusses research results in the context of available literature.
- The last chapter discusses recommendations for future studies and summarizes the study.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Social inequality cannot be understood without taking into account historical, political and economic sources of this inequality (Markus & Stephens, 2017). Racial and economic inequality in South Africa is socially and historically produced (Deer, 2014). Different governments throughout the history of the country formalized racial and economic inequality through statutes that aimed to elevate the position of white South Africans (Posel, 2001). This inequality was externalized through institutions that regulated the daily lives of South Africans (Posel, 2001). South Africans came to see race as a common-sense categorization and this way of perceiving the world has persisted into the post-apartheid era (Posel, 2001). This chapter discusses some of the historical, political and economic events that were influential in shaping current race and class hierarchies.

2.2. THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE FORMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2.2.1. British Colonies

2.2.1.1. Black African Converts

Liberal European missionaries arrived in South Africa to introduce Christianity to the natives of this country (Gilmour, 2007; Richner; 2004). These missionaries believed that black Africans were inferior but if they were introduced to Christanity they could be civilized (Richner; 2004). Liberal missionaries further opposed slavery and the exploitation of indigenous people by colonists (Richner; 2004). The liberal missionaries opened the first black African school for sons of Xhosa chiefs in the Cape in 1799 (Ndlovu, 2002). Missionaries left an indelible mark on converted black African communities and their influence is still felt in present-day South Africa (Gilmour, 2007). According to Comaroff and Comaroff (1986), missionaries altered converted black Africans' daily routines and accepted ideas by introducing a European way of being. Black African converts were introduced to new conventions such as monogamous marriages and Western styles of dressing (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Mabandla, 2015). Missionaries further introduced a dual power system and diffused the power that black African chiefs had in their communities (Cobley, 1986, Mabandla, 2015).

When the mining industry was established in the 1860s (Rehbein, 2018), mission-educated black Africans had an advantage over other black Africans because they had been trained to participate in the industrial world (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986). They knew how to read, write and perform basic arithmetic (Cobley, 1986, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Mabandla, 2015). These black Africans had also been introduced to the concept of time and the idea that the usage of time had to be maximised for material benefit (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986). Missionaries further encouraged black Africans to engage in wage labour by training them in occupations such as teaching and ministry (Cobley, 1986, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Southall, 2014). The demand for educated black Africans grew during the

period of industrialization and these black Africans were employed by colonial authorities in clerical and semi-skilled labour positions (Cobley, 1986, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986).

Black African converts were also taught agricultural techniques and they were encouraged to sell their surpluses in commercialized markets (Cobley, 1986, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Mabandla, 2015). Peires (2007) states that black African farmers started emerging after the 1860s and these farmers competed successfully with white farmers. Engaging in commercial trading and wage labour introduced the concept of money and the idea that economic success was based on personal agency (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986). Educated black Africans started forming an elite group in black African communities and they were involved in occupations such as commercial farming, teaching, interpreting, and reserve policing (Cobley, 1986, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Mabandla, 2015).

2.2.1.2. Black African Slaves , Serfs and Free Labour

The settlers were farmers who were brought in by the British government in 1820 to defend and cultivate land on the Eastern frontier of the Cape (Cobbing, 1998). These farmers experienced labour shortages because black Africans were not allowed to work on farms in the Cape Colony (Cobbing, 1998). British settlers could also not own slaves as the Cape Colony had decreed in 1807 that the number of slaves could not be increased (Cobbing, 1998). This was precipitated by British Authorities in London who were considering abolishing slavery (Cobbing, 1998). The settlers first used the provisions of the Apprenticeship of Servants Proclamation of 1812 that allowed settlers to apprentice Khoi children if they were orphans, destitute or grew up on the settler's farm (Glücksmann, 2010). The apprenticeship was compulsory from the ages of eight (8) to twenty-five (25) (Cobbing,

1998; Glücksmann, 2010). However, apprenticing Khoi children did not alleviate the shortage of labour on farms (Cobbing, 1998; Richner, 2004).

The settlers were mostly European supremacists who believed that black Africans were inferior and they lobbied the government to change labour laws to force black Africans to work on their farms (Richner, 2004). From 1823, this group of settlers and missionaries started kidnapping black Africans from their communities (Cobbing, 1998; Richner, 2004). These black Africans were presented to British authorities in London as harmless refugees from the Mfecane wars that were raging in black African communities (Cobbing, 1998; Richner, 2004). Settlers paid missionaries with guns, gunpowder, oxen, horses, whereas child workers fetch higher prices than adult workers (Cobbing, 1998; Richner, 2004). Settlers also sometimes bypassed missionaries and organized their own slave and cattle raids (Cobbing, 1998). As it was still illegal for black Africans to work on farms in the Cape colony, Ordinance 49 of 1828 was passed to allow black African refugees to voluntarily work on farms (Glücksmann, 2010). Missionaries continued with slave trading but they embellished the facts they told authorities in London by stating that the refugees could terminate their employment with a settler at any time and that the settlers were vetted to ensure that refugees worked for humane settlers (Cobbing, 1988).

Slavery was abolished in the Cape Colony in 1833 and the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1841 stipulated a fine for employers who were found holding children against their will (Glücksmann, 2010). However, the Masters and Servants Act of 1856 decreed that it was not illegal for employers to hold children whose parents or guardians were alive against their will and this law was only repealed in 1974 (Glücksmann, 2010).The Masters and Servants Act of 1856, also made it a criminal offence for unskilled labourers who were mostly black Africans

to breach their contracts through desertion-voluntarily leaving their employment (Glücksmann, 2010).

When the mining industry started experiencing labour shortages, black Africans had to be coerced into working in the developing economy as they lived off their land (Ally, 1985). The Glen Grey Act of 1894 imposed a labour tax on black African men and most of these men had to engage in wage employment to raise this tax (Ally, 1985). Black African men who joined the mining sector to raise this tax started work in an industry where white trade unions formed in the 1880s had won the right for skilled jobs to be reserved for white men (MacRae, 1974). The wage levels of black African men were suppressed to afford artificially high salaries negotiated by these trade unions (MacRae, 1974). The salaries of black African men were based on calculations that assumed that these men were single and had no dependents (MacRae, 1974). In this period, there was inter-racial income inequality in the mining sector between black African and white men (MacRae, 1974; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). There was also intra-racial inequality between a small number of educated black Africans and a majority that earned very low wages (Cobley, 1986, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Mabandla, 2015).

2.2.2. History of Black Africans

The history of black Africans in the 1800s was written by English white men (Richner, 2004). Afrikaners started to write about the history of Voortrekkers from 1928 and they minimally included black Africans in their texts (Richner, 2004). Historians agree that the history of black Africans written in the 1800s was a mixture of truth, lies, half-truths and imaginations and at present it is not easy to separate facts from fiction (Cobbing, 1988;

Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). The writers of this history had different motives and they adjusted their texts to suit different audiences (Cobbing, 1988; Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). Some oral history interviews from black Africans were included in the texts but the writers had the latitude to edit out the versions that they did not believe or that did not conform to their narratives (Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004). Furthermore, the black Africans interviewed narrated history from the worldview of their tribes and some of the information they provided was not what they had experienced but what had been transmitted from generation to generation (Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004).

Black Africans entered most history books through the Mfecane wars that allegedly took place between 1810 and 1830 (Cobbing, 1988; Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). Past historians stated that Mfecane was started by Shaka who had expelled Mzilikazi and Matiwane from the Zulu kingdom (Cobbing, 1988; Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). The expulsion of Matiwane and Mzilikazi is said to have sparked a chain reaction where their supporters pillaged other black African villages leading to the areas outside the Cape colony being depopulated (Cobbing, 1988; Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). Shaka in some narratives was presented as a heroic state builder with superior military acumen whereas in other narratives as a cruel monster who took advantage of vulnerable tribes (Hamilton, 1992).

The Mfecane narrative remained unquestioned until Cobbing (1988) pointed out inconsistencies and improbabilities that formed part of this story. The aftermath of Mfecane coincided with the expansion of British and Boer territories into fertile uninhabited land that black Africans had happened to abandon during the war (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). Mfecane also coincided with an era where settlers were in dire need of labour

and the supply of black African labour dramatically increased with the appearance of refugees who were running away from Shaka (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006). The histories of black Africans, Boers and the British are intertwined but they were treated separately and the preoccupations of painting some as heroes and others as villains neglected to mention that at different times these groups were allies, enemies and instigators of unprovoked violence on vulnerable communities (Cobbing, 1988; Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004; Wright, 2006).

The history of the 1800s does not provide an accurate representation of the past regarding the origin of black African tribes, how these tribes ended up being ruled by different paramount chiefs and why they are clustered in certain locations in South Africa (Wright, 2006). This history, however, exposes fundamental beliefs and unquestioned ideologies that are still prevalent in the current South African context (Hamilton ,1992). Richner (2004) states that the validity of Mfecane was equally accepted by liberals, radicals, African Nationalists and by those who used it to justify apartheid. Hamilton (1992) further states that those who believed this myth were not simple-minded but it is because the narrative was Doxa. According to Deer (2014), Bourdieu explained that people in a field share unquestioned assumptions and this determines practices that are natural in that field. The narrative of Mfecane was established on an accepted theory that black African leaders were savages, barbaric and tyrants (Cobbing, 1988; Hamilton, 1992; Richner, 2004). Even scholars ignored texts that contradicted the view of Shaka being a savage (Hamilton, 1992).

The narrative of Mfecane further employed the accepted stereotype of irrational black Africans (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2005). Some stories even accused black Africans of destroying their own villages and crops and consequently bringing starvation onto themselves

so they could engage in cannibalism (Cobbing, 1988). The narrative of Mfecane was also hinged on the premise of the noble British who paternalistically protected the interests of black Africans (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2004). British colonizers took in blackAfrican refugees who did not want to go back to their tyrant chiefs but insisted on going with them to be slaves or black Africans who insisted on working for free because they were grateful for being rescued from Shaka (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2004). As a result of the British being principled, they could not in good conscience leave behind black African women and children to suffer at the hands of despotic black African chiefs (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2004).

Furthermore, Cobbing (1988) states that colonialists presented themselves as protectors of vulnerable black African communities and they sometimes stepped in to prevent them from being bullied by other savage and warlike black African tribes (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2004). Reports that these protectors placed black African children and women in concentration camps were mostly ignored (Richner, 2004). British authorities also presented themselves as resorting to violence only when the interests of the colony and its citizens were threatened (Cobbing, 1988; Richner, 2005). According to Richner (2004), scholars who analyse texts written by British citizens who were in South Africa neglect to appreciate that when writing to other Europeans and the authorities in London these British citizens had to present their actions as humanitarian endeavours to avoid political and social censure. Cobbing (1988) states that the land dispossession, slavery and the destabilisation of black African communities that took place in the 1800s have been psychologically displaced on black Africans whom history has burdened with the guilt of having destroyed themselves.

2.2.3. Boer Provinces

When British colonial authorities took over the Cape in 1806, there was tension between them and the Boers who previously managed the Cape (Morton, 2005). This conflict arose over issues such as the introduction of taxation, the abolishment of slavery and the replacement of Dutch as an official language with English (Ndzwayiba, 2017). In the period between 1835 and 1846, some members of the Boer community decided to move into the interior of the land (Ndzwayiba, 2017). They established the provinces of Transvaal and Orange Free State (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978).

2.2.3.1. Inboekselings or Oorlame Kaffirs

In 1852, Voortrekker (Boer) leaders signed an agreement with British authorities that made slave trading illegal (Morton, 2005). The practice of raiding and slave trading, however, continued unabated in Boer republics (Trapido, 1978). During raids, black African children were taken and kept as prisoners of war (Trapido, 1978). Morton (2005) estimates that slaves comprised approximately ten per cent (10%) of the population in Boer republics in the mid-1860s. Captured children were labelled as orphans and registered with authorities as apprentices-inboekelinge (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). These children were allocated to a white Master who had a right to get compensation for maintaining them when they were being “handed over” to a new master (Trapido, 1978). Inboekselings were isolated from other black Africans as they usually lived on secluded farms and could only communicate in Dutch (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). Most of these black African children were also abducted when they were young and they could not remember their families and communities of origin (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978).

Abducted black African children joined white families that had different material conditions and values (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). The living experiences of inboekselings were not uniform with some children being treated with paternalistic affection whilst others were mistreated (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). Some families saw it as their duty to civilize black African children and these children were taught how to read and write Dutch (Morton, 2005). Female inboekselings mostly performed domestic work whilst the men were taught skills that were aligned to the business enterprises of their masters (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). According to Morton (2005), inboekselings who were attached to affluent farmers learnt how to tan hides, breed animals, transport goods with oxen and new irrigation techniques that farmers were adopting at the time. Inboekselings also participated in raiding black African communities and their fortune sometimes rose when that of their masters rose (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). Some inboekselings were further given small plots of land to farm and a heifer when they joined the families of their masters (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). These black Africans were regarded as Oorlame kaffirs (civilised black Africans) who were not as savage as their kin but not as sophisticated as their masters (Morton, 2005).

It was mandated by the law that female inboekselings had to be released at age twenty-one (21) and male inboekselings at age twenty-five (25) (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). This law was not strictly enforced as inboekselings had to be released to another master as the law prohibited them from being masterless (Trapido, 1978). This master could be a tribal chief or another white authority (Trapido, 1978). This limited the freedom of inboekselings as some could not remember where they came from and others who attached themselves to black African communities struggled to live in these communities because of cultural differences (Trapido, 1978). Black African communities were also not eager to incorporate inboekselings into their communities (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). Female inboekselings mostly gained

their freedom through being sold as brides to nomadic black African ox-wagon drivers or they married other inboekselings who mostly remained in the service of their masters (Morton, 2005).

In the late 1850s, Boer authorities allowed missionaries, except for British missionaries, to work with black African communities (Morton, 2005; Ruether, 2003). The earliest black African Christian converts in most communities were individuals who occupied subordinate positions in society (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986). In the Transvaal, inboekselings made up a majority of early Christian converts (Morton, 2005). Inboekselings who wanted to leave their masters could be released to be under the guardianship of white missionaries (Trapido, 1978). Mission stations also offered inboekselings an environment that was a continuation of the European culture that they were accustomed to but with freedom from slavery (Trapido, 1978).

Inboekselings became the first beneficiaries of missionary education in the Transvaal and some of them were trained as teachers and ministers (Morton, 2005). Inboekselings also acquired marketable skills in mission stations or they used the skills that they had already acquired in Boer households and this enabled them to participate in the emerging industrial economy (Trapido, 1978). Morton (2005) further states that as prominent black Africans became westernized, having educated wives who were literate or knowledgeable about European culture became a status symbol. Some educated daughters of inboekselings were married by members of royal families with the expectation that they would reproduce children who were knowledgeable in European culture (Morton, 2005).

2.2.3.2. Mission Stations

Comaroff and Comaroff (1986) argue that the history between missionaries and black African communities is complicated. The relationship between these two groups was sometimes a marriage of convenience mostly motivated by practical concerns rather than spiritual matters (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1986; Trapido, 1978). Black African communities lived in a constant struggle with Boer farmers who needed land and cheap labour (Ruether, 2003; Trapido, 1978). Black Africans were also subjected to tax raids with tax collectors harassing them and confiscating their cattle at will (Trapido, 1978). Some black African chiefs had also formed working relationships with prominent Boers (Morton, 2005; Trapido, 1978). Black African females under these chiefs had to work as seasonal workers on Boer farms and the males were co-opted to participate in slave raids (Morton, 2005). These chiefs economically benefitted from these working relationships with some chiefs like Mokgatle achieving a standard of living that was higher than that of most members of the Boer community (Morton, 2005). As a result, chiefs sometimes overworked members of their communities so they could benefit financially (Trapido, 1978).

Since black Africans were not allowed to own land in Boer republics, some arranged with missionaries to buy land on their behalf (Ruether, 2003; Trapido, 1978). A group of black Africans or intact black African communities would pool money and cattle to buy land and this land would be registered in the name of the missionary (Ruether, 2003; Trapido, 1978). These black Africans were deemed to be under the authority of missionaries and this protected them from chiefs, tax collectors and Boer farmers (Trapido, 1978). In exchange, black Africans aligned with missionaries had to convert to Christianity (Trapido, 1978). Ruether (2003) indicates that in the period 1864 to 1874, approximately eighty per cent

(80%) of mission stations were built on land acquired by black Africans. These individuals and their children benefitted from educational opportunities provided by missionaries (Trapido, 1978). Missionaries, however, were the owners of the land and they sometimes sold the land for personal gain or to discipline communities that they regarded as wayward (Trapido, 1978).

The Squatters Land Act of 1887 came into effect after Boer farmers who owned small farms and could not afford to pay market-related wages demanded that black Africans should be forced by the law to work on their farms (Trapido, 1978). The Squatters Land Act limited the number of black African families that could live on a farm to five families unless the farmer could prove that he needed more than five families to meet labour requirements on his farm (Trapido, 1978). This law was enacted to redistribute available black African labour across different Boer farms (Trapido, 1978). Mission stations were not exempted from this law and they were turned into locations that were in the custody of the state. Black African communities that had bought land to build mission stations were not allowed to sell the land as the state took ownership of it (Trapido, 1978).

2.2.3.3. Sharecroppers and labour tenants

Boer households, mission stations and land companies were the three major groups that owned land in Boer provinces (Trapido, 1976). Black Africans who engaged in commercial farming could lease land from these three groups in exchange for rent, profit-sharing and labour (Mohlamme, 2000; Trapido, 1997; Van Onselen, 1990). According to Van Onselen (1990), race and class shaped interactions between white farmers and black Africans in rural communities. Black Africans in rural communities did not occupy the same social and

economic position and it was recognized that there were oorlame kaffirs (civilized black Africans), plaas kaffirs (farmworkers), kneg (boys), and voorman (foreman) (Van Onselen, 1990).

Sharecroppers were at the top of the social class hierarchy and they leased land from white landowners who were sometimes absent from the land (Mohlamme, 2000; Trapido, 1997; Van Onselen, 1990). These black Africans could cultivate the land without interference and they shared profits equally with the landowner (Mohlamme, 2000; Trapido, 1978; Van Onselen, 1990). The landowner sometimes provided land and seed (Mohlamme, 2000) whilst other sharecroppers used their equipment and seed and only required land (Van Onselen, 1990). According to Van Onselen (1990), the only difference between successful black African sharecroppers and white farmers was that black African sharecroppers could not own land or vote.

Trapido (1978) indicates that before 1900, black African farmers in the Transvaal earned approximately £47 000 pounds for every £26 000 pounds earned by Boer farmers at local markets. Trapido (1978) further indicates that black African farmers, unlike Boer farmers, did not struggle with securing labour as black African labourers preferred working for them. Prominent sharecroppers also owned large herds of cattle and some got involved in other businesses such as oxen transportation (Trapido, 1978; Van Onselen, 1990). Sharecroppers also lived a relatively independent social life (Mohlamme, 2000; Trapido, 1978; Van Onselen, 1990). They were protected from chiefs, tax collectors and Boer farmers as they lived on white land (Trapido, 1978). Unlike black Africans who lived in missionary stations, they were also not obliged to pay tithes to missionaries, have monogamous marriages and

refrain from recreational activities such as beer drinking (Schirmer, 1994; Trapido, 1978; Van Onselen, 1990).

According to Van Onselen (1990), labour tenants were a rung below black African sharecroppers on the social class hierarchy. Labour tenants acquired land from landowners to farm and graze their cattle and in exchange, they paid rent and also provided their labour (Trapido, 1978; Van Onselen, 1990). Before 1900, labour tenants who lived with Boer families had to offer forty (40) days of labour in a three or four years cycle and after 1900 this was increased to ninety (90) days (Trapido, 1976). A Boer farmer also received a recruiting fee when black African men on his farm went to work in mines (Trapido, 1978). According to Trapido (1978), most land tenants on Boer farms were inboekselings.

Land companies that had links with mining companies also hired out land in exchange for rent and labour in the mines (Trapido, 1978). Black Africans on these farms, unlike those on Boer farms, were allowed to cultivate as much land as they wanted (Trapido, 1978). According to Trapido (1978), some of the communities that were established by land tenants were so successful that they managed to build churches, schools and meeting halls. Other members of these communities also owned animals and had farming equipment (Trapido, 1978). The Anti- Squatters law passed in 1887 was not stringently applied until after 1905 when large commercial farmers started applying pressure for the competition from black African sharecroppers and labour tenants to be eliminated (Trapido, 1978). After this period, the number of black African sharecroppers and labour tenants was significantly reduced (Trapido, 1978).

2.3. THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1910 AND 1947

In 1910, British colonies (Cape and Natal) and independent Boer republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State) were merged to form the Union of South Africa (Posel, 2001; Southall, 2014). South Africa entered a period where there was a concerted effort to redistribute income and earnings to ensure that white South Africans had a higher standard of living when compared to other race groups (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). According to Innes (2007), within the white group, English-speaking whites were the dominant group and their interests were paramount. Afrikaans-speaking whites had political rights but they were economically disadvantaged (Innes, 2007). A racial income hierarchy started developing in this period and this was the beginning of social class becoming synonymous with race in the country (MacRae, 1973; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). The black African middle-class entered a period where their upward mobility was hampered by economic discrimination that was justified through racist ideologies (Cobley, 1986; MacRae, 1973; Southall, 2014).

Cobley (1986) states that for most middle-class black Africans this was an era of preserving their class position instead of upward mobility. The black African middle-class of this era was an intact group and the group ensured that their collective cultural, economic and social capital was used to maintain their position (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Southall; 2016). Middle-class black Africans created a common cultural identity by engaging in cultural activities such as debates, choral competitions and sports clubs (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Southall; 2016). Social relations between members of this group were further built through inter-marriages, professional associations and friendships (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Southall; 2016). Middle-class black Africans in this period also started combining land ownership, entrepreneurship and employment in middle-class occupations (education) to

maintain their class position (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Van Onselen; 1998). Mabandla (2015) states that by diversifying their income-generating activities, some middle-class black African families managed to maintain their class position when most black Africans were experiencing downward mobility.

2.3.1. Sharecroppers and labour tenants

When the Union of South Africa was formed, the labour needs of British colonialists and Boer farmers converged as both parties needed cheap labour (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). British capitalists had made substantial investments in the mining sector and wages had to be suppressed since profits were low between 1908 and 1920 (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Trapido, 1976). Boer farmers also struggled with labour shortages as wages in the mines were higher than what they offered (Trapido, 1978). Some black Africans also relied on subsistence farming and they were not attracted to wage employment whilst other black Africans were engaged in commercial farming (Trapido, 1978). The Land Act of 1913 was enacted to force black Africans into wage employment (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Eighty-three per cent (83%) of South African land was allocated to white South Africans and black Africans were not allowed to own land or engage in commercial farming (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Peires, 2007).

The Land Act also aimed to eradicate the practice of sharecropping and labour tenancy (Mohlamme, 2000). Sharecroppers and land tenants who were affected by this act experienced downward mobility with some becoming wage labourers (Mabandla, 2015; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Law enforcement capabilities of officials, however, differed from area to area and some sharecroppers moved to areas where prosecutions for

sharecropping were low (Van Onselen, 1988). In the Lydenburg area, for example, the removal of black African tenants from farms lagged for more than twenty years after the Land Act was promulgated. Removals only started intensifying after the Land Act of 1936 devoted resources to removing black African tenants from white land (Schirmer, 1996). Smaller white landowners who had challenges with capital continued with the practice of sharecropping up until the introduction of the tractor in the mid-1940s (Van Onselen, 1988). Trapido (1984) also mentions that larger land companies applied to be exempted from the act and they took advantage of the weakened position of black African sharecroppers by reducing them to the status of labour tenants. Black Africans were allowed to buy land in areas that were reserved for them (Mabandla, 2015). For example, in 1908 black Africans were allowed to buy land in Mthatha as the municipality needed to finance the construction of a dam. A minority of landowning black Africans continued to farm commercially but a majority of black Africans were dispossessed of their land in this period (Mabandla, 2015).

2.3.2. Occupational Structures

A majority of black Africans who attended school in this period did not progress beyond primary school education (Cobley, 1986; Southall, 2014). Only seven per cent (7%) of black Africans were literate in 1911 (Cobley, 1986). Approximately thirty per cent (30%) of black Africans attended school in 1925 and less than one per cent (1%) of those who attended school in 1935 were in high school (Thompson, 2001). Cobley (1986) indicates that only two hundred and fifty-three (253) black Africans had obtained matric between 1901 and 1934. Cobley (1986) further indicates that only students from wealthy families or who had scholarships acquired the level of education that enabled them to progress into middle-class occupations.

The University College of Fort Hare was the first black African university in South Africa and it opened its doors in 1916 (Southall, 2016). Before 1916, black Africans obtained their tertiary education overseas (Cobley, 1986; Ndlovu, 2002; Ramela, 2018; Thompson, 2001). For example, one of the founders of the African National Congress Pixley ka Isaka Seme completed his undergraduate degree at Columbia University, his law degree at Oxford University and he qualified as a lawyer after passing the British bar exam in 1910 (Thompson, 2001). Another notable example is Cecilia Makiwane; the first black African nurse in South Africa (Cobley, 1986; Ramela, 2018). She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in 1896 from Wilberforce University (Cobley, 1986; Ramela, 2018). Cobley (1986) indicates that estimations regarding the number of black African students who attained tertiary education in America before 1910 range from a hundred (100) to four hundred (400). Black Africans who had obtained tertiary education were regarded as elites and they formed a small minority in black African communities (Cobley, 1986; Southall, 2016; Thompson, 2001).

Black Africans in middle-class occupations made up one per cent (1%) of those employed in 1911 (Cobley, 1986, Ramela, 2018). The representation of black Africans in middle-class occupations increased to two per cent (2%) in 1936 and this number stayed constant until 1951 (Cobley, 1986). A majority of black Africans in this period were employed in the mining and agricultural sector and they mostly occupied unskilled positions (Ramela, 2018). Black Africans were also employed in workplaces that practised economic discrimination (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Ramela, 2018; Thompson, 2001). The Mines and Works Act of 1911, for example, had legislated that black Africans could not oversee the work of white people (Seroto, 2004). This practice was justified by classifying white people as civilized labour and black Africans as uncivilised labour (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). As a

result, skilled jobs with high pay were reserved for white males (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Ramela, 2018; Thompson, 2001).

Maximum wages that black Africans could be paid and minimum wages that white workers could be paid were set by the government (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). The wages set for white workers were high as they were based on the assumption that these workers had to maintain a civilized lifestyle and the wage bill was kept low by paying black African workers low wages (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Ramela, 2018; Thompson, 2001). The salaries of black African workers fluctuated based on economic conditions in the country (Cobley, 1986). Thompson (2001) estimates that the difference between the cash wages of black Africans and white people in 1920 was approximately one to eleven (1:11). Salaries of black Africans in most middle-class occupations were also capped to ensure that their living standard did not exceed that of unskilled white males (Cobley, 1986). Nattrass and Seekings (2010) argue that the racial economic inequality that is currently prevalent in South Africa was fostered in this period by deliberate interventions that aimed to create a hierarchical income structure based on race.

From the 1920s, occupations started playing a significant role in demarcating black Africans into different class positions (Cobley, 1986). The economic downturn in the early 1920s and the great depression that took place between 1929 and 1932 led to the government instituting measures that aimed to ensure that white people were cushioned from these economic events (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). In 1924, the government committed to interchanging uncivilised labour with civilized labour (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Black Africans who worked in lower-middle-class positions for example as drivers, shop assistants, and messengers were retrenched to make room for white males (Cobley, 1986). Supervisory positions were also

created for white males to manage black Africans who had until then worked independently and restrictions on salaries and promotions were instituted for black Africans (Cobley, 1986; MacRae, 1974). Black Africans working in lower-middle-class positions in the civil service such as clerks, interpreters and police reserves were most affected by these changes (Cobley, 1986). Higher standards of education were also imposed on professions such as teaching (Cobley, 1986). A certified teacher started earning double the salary of an uncertified teacher and a teacher with a university degree earned five times the salary of an uncertified teacher (Southall, 2014). Furthermore, technological advances also led to the devaluation of some lower-middle-class jobs such as those occupied by shoemakers, tailors and mechanics (Cobley, 1986).

The outbreak of World War Two (1939-1945) resulted in the South African economy growing as the country could supply new markets that were previously dominated by countries heavily involved in the war (Innes, 2007; Peires, 2007). White South African men were also fighting in the war and this created an opportunity for black Africans to be trained in professions that were previously reserved for white men (Innes, 2007; Peires, 2007). For example, the University of the Witwatersrand (1941) and the University of Cape Town (1943) started admitting black Africans into their medical schools due to a shortage of doctors in the country (Southall, 2016). A small number of black Africans who had been practising as doctors at that time had been trained outside the country (Cobley, 1986). A school for social workers was also opened in 1940 (Cobley, 1986). Black Africans in the manufacturing sector were also allowed to occupy skilled positions (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Black Africans further formed trade unions and engaged in militant action and this resulted in increased wages (Cobley, 1986; Innes, 2007; Peires, 2007). The wage gap

between black African and white workers reduced significantly during the war (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010).

Middle-class occupations in the black African communities in this period included social workers, nurses, ministers, journalists, certified teachers, interpreters, lawyers and senior clerks (Cobley, 1986). The most elite positions in the manufacturing sector were occupied by baas boys and Izinduna (Nzimande, 1991; Thompson, 2001). Nzimande (1991) states that Izinduna were the first black African Human Resources (HR) practitioners. They were tasked with recruiting labour from their villages of origin, disciplining workers and attending to social issues of workers (Nzimande, 1991). They also served as a liaison between white compound managers and black African workers (Nzimande, 1991). Izinduna worked in the compounds where black African workers lived whilst baas boys had authority on the factory floor (Nzimande, 1991). Baas boys supervised the work performed by other black Africans and they were a liaison between white supervisors and black African workers (Nzimande, 1991).

2.3.3. Entrepreneurs

Black Africans were regarded as temporary residents who were in urban areas for employment purposes (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). Thus, the government did not encourage black African entrepreneurship (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). In 1923, the Natives (Urban) Act allowed for black African shops to be established in townships to limit the number of black Africans who shopped in white areas after working hours (Maseko, 2000). These shops were only allowed to sell daily necessities (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). Black African entrepreneurs of that time could be categorized

into fixed traders who had licenses to trade, peddlers who moved around the township selling their wares, hawkers who sat in one area and street traders who sold goods on behalf of white wholesalers (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000). Fixed traders were the only group that was legally allowed to sell goods in townships and most of these traders were mission-educated black Africans who were literate and could manage the administrative requirements of running a formal business (Cobley, 1986).

According to Cobley (1986), black African entrepreneurs when compared to other black African middle-class occupational groups were the most susceptible to downward mobility. Black African entrepreneurs were prohibited by the law to run their businesses outside townships but members of other racial groups were allowed to sell goods in the townships (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000). These entrepreneurs also competed with illegal traders who had very low expenses (Cobley, 1986). Black African entrepreneurs further struggled with obtaining trading licences or expanding the range of goods that they sold because local authorities applied arbitrary standards when it came to granting trading rights (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). As the government had aimed to limit the number of businesses in the townships, there was a shortage of business sites (Cobley, 1986). Consequently, there was intense competition among entrepreneurs for premises and this led to rents being exorbitant (Cobley, 1986). Black African entrepreneurs also struggled to obtain supplies from wholesalers as some wholesalers employed street traders to sell goods on their behalf in the townships (Cobley, 1986). Wholesalers, in addition, refused to extend credit to black African entrepreneurs as they regarded this to be risky (Cobley, 1986). They perceived that black Africans were not inherently capable of running successful businesses (Cobley, 1986).

Self-employed black African artisans also struggled to sustain self-employment (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000). These artisans were denied opportunities to access skilled jobs in industry because of the colour bar (Maseko, 2000). They were also, like other black African entrepreneurs, dependent on a limited market and a customer base that was mostly poor as a result of earning suppressed wages (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Thus, there was an oversupply of artisans in black African communities due to limited demand for their industrial skills and job reservation practices in industry (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000). The mass production of goods by manufacturers and resultant economies of scale further created difficult trading conditions for self-employed artisans to run profitable businesses (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000).

The Natives Act of 1923 introduced Local Advisory Boards that were meant to advise white-controlled municipalities regarding black African issues in the townships (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000). Cobley (1986) states that black African entrepreneurs were overrepresented on these boards when compared to their proportion in townships. A position on the board meant access to privileged information regarding new business opportunities and it also created opportunities for black African entrepreneurs to form relationships with local authorities (Cobley, 1986). Some businesspeople benefitted financially from being part of these boards (Cobley, 1986). In 1945, amendments to the Natives Act limited trading in townships to legal black African entrepreneurs only (Cobley, 1986; Maseko, 2000). Cobley (1986) states that black African entrepreneurs who had trading rights entered a period of relative prosperity as business opportunities increased. Illegal traders, however, experienced difficult trading conditions as the law made it challenging for them to operate their businesses (Maseko, 2000).

The black African middle-class in this period was still cohesive and members of this group maintained relationships across urban and rural areas (Cobley, 1986; Southall, 2016). Those who were elites in this group had citizenship rights (until 1936), tertiary education, property rights, and parents who were professionals (Cobley, 1986; Southall, 2016). Middle-class black Africans of this era had high class awareness and they ensured that there was social closure around their activities (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Southall, 2016). In the 1930s, members of this group started forming trading store co-operatives and a small number became relatively prosperous in the 1940s (Cobley, 1986). Middle-class black Africans who were not full-time entrepreneurs also engaged in speculative businesses and this enabled full-time middle-class entrepreneurs to access financial backing (Cobley, 1986).

Middle-class black Africans also shared information about business opportunities that were available in rural and urban areas (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015; Southall, 2016). Some of them acquired land in urban and rural areas by forming land syndicates (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015). The land in rural areas was used for subsistence and commercial farming (Mabandla, 2015). Land in privately owned townships enabled black Africans to build their own houses, generate income through renting to tenants and some sites also had trading rights (Cobley, 1986). Black entrepreneurs of this period included land-owning commercial farmers, artisans, taxi owners, barbers, carpenters, dressmakers and shop owners (Cobley, 1986; Mabandla, 2015, Maseko, 2000).

2.4. THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1948 AND 1993

During World War Two, South Africa went through a period of reform (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). The colour bar was relaxed, wages of black

Africans increased and pass laws were relaxed (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). The National Party's electoral campaign for the 1948 elections was centred on the idea that the government should do more to maintain the racial hierarchy that existed in South African society (Thompson, 2001). This message resonated with Afrikaner workers who were unhappy with reforms in the workplace, farmers who were losing workers because of relaxed pass laws and businesspeople that had to pay higher wages to black Africans (Thompson, 2001).

The National Party government came into power in 1948 and implemented apartheid-separate development (Attwell, 1986). When the National Party came into power in 1948, racial discrimination was already established in institutional practices and social patterns in South Africa (Glücksmann, 2010). The National Party government only ensured that racial segregation became more formalized and systematic (Glücksmann, 2010). The policy of apartheid was based on the Broederbond's economic strategy that aimed to elevate the political and economic position of Afrikaners (Innes, 2007). The Population Registration Act of 1950 was enacted to ensure that each South African was allocated a race (Posel, 2001). Black Africans were relegated to an inferior position economically, socially, and politically through a myriad of laws (Innes, 2007; Peires, 2007).

2.4.1. Bantu Education

In the 1930s, the South African government developed a fully-fledged education system for white people to address the poor white problem (Shingler, 1973). Education was made compulsory for white children between the ages of seven (7) and sixteen (16) (Shingler, 1973). Poor white children and those from remote areas were provided with free meals,

clothing, accommodation and textbooks (Shingler, 1973). There was already an uneven distribution of spending on the education of white students versus that of other race groups when the Bantu Education Act was promulgated in 1953 (Murphy, 1973). The Act was promulgated based on recommendations of a report produced by the Eiselen Commission in 1951 (Christie &Collins, 1982; Rose, 1965; Seroto, 2004, Wills, 2011). Popular discourse attributes the genesis of the decline of black African education to Bantu education but scholars point out that the education system was already racially segregated before this Act (Christie &Collins, 1982, Giliomee, 2012).

Black African education was also in a state of crisis when the Bantu Education Act was promulgated (Christie &Collins, 1982, Giliomee, 2012). Although there were excellent black African missionary schools, a majority of black African schools had poor facilities, overcrowded classes; high dropout rates and a shortage of qualified teachers (Christie & Collins, 1982, Giliomee, 2012; Greaves 1955; Hyslop, 1988). Missionary schools were also embroiled in conflicts with politically active university-educated teachers who wanted to have the same conditions of employment as white teachers (Hyslop, 1988). Furthermore, students at missionary schools were swept in the wave of nationalism and from the 1940s there was a sharp increase in violent student protests at these schools (Chisholm, 2017; Hyslop, 1988, Wills, 2011).

According to Christie and Collins (1982), Bantu education had multiple objectives and the act was not created solely in bad faith nor was it a purely utilitarian policy that aimed to reproduce racially-based class relations. Its impact on black African communities was contradictory and complex (Christie & Collins, 1982). In the period between 1921 and 1946, twenty-five per cent (25%) of black Africans lived in urban areas (Christie & Collins, 1982).

There was an increase in juvenile delinquency in urban areas as a majority of black African children did not attend school (Hyslop, 1988). The missionary education system was overstretched and could not accommodate a large number of black African students (Giliomee, 2012; Wills, 2011). Providing mass education to black African youth was seen as a way to alleviate this problem (Hyslop, 1988). The provision of Bantu education shifted black African education from being an exclusionary service that could only be accessed by middle-class black Africans to being more widely accessible (Giliomee, 2012). This was a blessing for working-class black African parents who could not access education before and a curse for middle-class parents whose children were receiving quality education from prestigious missionary schools (Wills, 2011).

Bantu Education was also implemented to address perceived and real shortcomings of black African education (Christie & Collins, 1982; Rose, 1965; Seroto, 2004). The education of black Africans was transferred from missionaries to a state-controlled schooling system (Christie & Collins, 1982; Ndlovu, 2002; Seroto, 2004; Wills, 2011). The National Party government believed that the education system of black Africans had to be streamlined so that it prepared black Africans to occupy a subordinate position in the economic and social structure (Christie & Collins, 1982; Ndlovu, 2002; Nkomo, 1981; Seroto, 2004; Wills, 2011). The government deemed the education offered by missionaries to be dishonest as it did not acknowledge that black Africans could not occupy skilled, professional and managerial positions in South Africa (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012). Black Africans who were produced by the missionary education system according to the government became frustrated and dangerous when they could not be accommodated in white society (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012; Rose, 1965; Seroto, 2004;). The education system had to

transmit to black Africans that the racially-based economic hierarchy was legitimate and should not be questioned (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012; Seroto, 2004).

Missionary education was further criticised by the government for not being steeped in the black African community (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012). Black African parents had started to become less supportive of patronizing disciplinary methods that were exercised by missionaries (Chisholm, 2017; Hyslop, 1988, Wills, 2011). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 allowed black African parents to participate in the schooling system through school boards and school committees (Hyslop, 1988; Seroto, 2004). The curriculum for black Africans was also adapted to offer practical subjects such as gardening that could be used in black African communities instead of academic subjects such as mathematics that were perceived to have little use in the lives of black Africans (Giliomee, 2012; Greaves, 1955; Seroto, 2004; Wills, 2011). A majority of black African children at that time only spent four years in school and Bantu education also aimed to use these four years productively (Greaves, 1955; Wills, 2011). Black African children were taught religious education, basic literacy, numeracy and hygiene in the first four years of schooling (Christie & Collins, 1982; Hyslop, 1988). There was an automatic promotion in the first four years of schooling for black African children (Christie & Collins, 1982; Glaser, 2018; Seroto, 2004). Wide access to education improved literacy levels in black African communities (Christie & Collins, 1982).

Missionaries were further criticized by the government for using English as a medium of instruction and for teaching a western curriculum (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012; Rose, 1965). This according to critics resulted in black Africans rejecting their cultures and languages (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012; Rose, 1965). Mother-tongue instruction was introduced for the first four years of schooling and thereafter Afrikaans or English could

be used as a medium of instruction (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012). Giliomee (2012) argues that the state had no bad intentions in introducing mother-tongue instruction. Afrikaners were experiencing the benefits of being taught in their mother tongue, developing countries were adopting the practice of mother-tongue instruction and there was growing research that demonstrated that children grasped concepts more easily when they were taught in their mother tongue (Giliomee, 2012; Rose, 1965). Critics of mother-tongue instruction argued that this practice was aimed at creating tribalism within the black African community; it limited the subject choice of students as African languages had no vocabulary to explain concepts taught in academic subjects and English was a universal language that enabled black Africans to access the world (Christie & Collins, 1982; Rose, 1965). The other aim of Bantu education was to help black Africans respect their culture and this was done by teaching them that their culture was inferior when compared to European cultures (Christie & Collins, 1982; Nkomo, 1981; Wills, 2011).

Bantu Education was implemented with limited financial resources as the National Party could not risk alienating its voters by taxing them to finance this undertaking (Giliomee, 2012). The state provided 13 million Rands and the other expenses had to be covered by black African parents (Giliomee, 2012).To save costs teachers were expected to teach double or triple sessions, parents had to buy school books and stationery, under-qualified teachers were hired to save on salaries and feeding schemes were discontinued (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012; Greaves, 1955; Rose, 1965; Seroto, 2004). The quantity of black Africans who could access education increased but the quality of education provided was poor (Christie & Collins, 1982; Giliomee, 2012; Greaves, 1955; Rose, 1965; Seroto, 2004).

The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959 was enacted to establish five (5) black African universities in homelands and these universities were segregated by ethnicity and language groups of black Africans (Heffernan, 2017; Nkomo, 1981; Wills, 2011). This act also prohibited white universities from admitting black African students (Thompson, 2001). Before the Extension of University Education Act was passed, black African students could correspond with the University of South Africa or attend the College of Fort Hare (Thompson, 2001). Black African students also made up twelve per cent (12%) of students at the University of Cape Town, six per cent (6%) at the University of Witwatersrand and twenty-one per cent (21%) of students at the University of Natal (Thompson, 2001).

Homeland universities were meant to serve an elite group as only one per cent (1 %) of black African students reached matric between 1950 and 1960 (Christie & Collins, 1982). The purpose of these universities was to create workers who would administrate the homeland system (Nkomo, 1981). The number of black Africans who started obtaining degrees after this period rose significantly as the fees at these universities were low (Glaser, 2018; Wills, 2011). The disciplines offered by homeland universities were mostly in social sciences with teaching being the most dominant qualification acquired (Nzimande, 1991; Wills, 2011). Bonnin and Ruggunan (2013, 2016) indicate that most black Africans obtained qualifications that did not enable them to be professionally qualified and that also limited them to servicing other black Africans. Black African students had to obtain permission from the Minister of Native Affairs to study courses that were not offered at black African universities (Wills, 2011). As a result, black Africans comprised less than one per cent (1%) of professionals working as engineers, scientists, accountants and lawyers in 1965 (Wills, 2011). Bantustan universities also enabled black Africans to work as lecturers and after 1975 these universities started appointing black Africans as rectors (Wills, 2011).

Heffernan (2017) indicates that homeland universities opened the minds and eyes of black African students and allowed them to engage with what was happening in the world. In the 1960s, colonial authorities were exiting Africa and most African countries were gaining independence (Heffernan, 2017). This spawned a lot of African literature that became influential in shaping the thinking of black African students (Mukonde, 2020). Political ideas of African-Americans involved in the civil rights movement also played a significant role in influencing the political thinking of black African university students (Cobley, 1986; Nkomo, 1981). The popularity of Black Nationalism also grew as the government implemented escalating stringent measures to suppress black people (Nkomo, 1981; Wills, 2011).

The Black Consciousness Movement gained prominence in the 1960s and 1970s (Glaser, 2018; Wills, 2011). This movement encouraged black Africans to seek psychological liberation by seeing beauty in their skin colour (Mukonde, 2020; Wills, 2011). Members of this movement had clashes with university authorities and some of the university students who were expelled started working as teachers in high schools (Heffernan, 2019; Mukonde, 2020). As a result, the ideologies of the Black Conscious Movement started becoming popular in high schools (Glaser, 2016, 2018; Heffernan, 2019; Mukonde, 2020). The black African high school system had expanded significantly in the late 1960s and by the early 1970s, the already poor quality of education provided to black Africans had markedly declined (Glaser, 2018; Wills, 2011). According to Maseko (2000), there were approximately forty-six thousand (46 000) black African students in high school in 1960 and approximately three hundred and nineteen thousand (319 000) in 1975. The quality of education declined due to a shortage of classrooms, high student-teacher ratios and experienced teachers being promoted to manage newly established schools (Glaser, 2018; Wills, 2011). Inexperienced teachers, who made up a majority of black African teachers, maintained order in their

overcrowded classrooms by adopting an authoritarian style of teaching (Wills, 2011). Rote learning replaced robust debates and there was an increase in the use of corporal punishment (Wills, 2011).

In the 1970s students were exposed to racial inequality in society, politicised teachers who offered alternative information, literature that discussed black politics and the ideologies of black consciousness and black theology (Heffernan, 2019; Mukonde, 2020). The independence of Angola and Mozambique had also created political excitement (Heffernan, 2019; Mukonde, 2020). In 1976, the National Party government introduced Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in black African schools (Glaser, 2018; Heffernan, 2019; Mukonde, 2020; Wills, 2011). High school students in SOWETO took to the streets to protest against this and school children were shot and killed by police officers (Glaser, 2018; Heffernan, 2019; Mukonde, 2020 Wills, 2011).

The 1976 protests spawned a generation that wanted freedom first and education later (Glaser, 2018; Heffernan, 2019; Wills, 2011). Glaser (2018) states that after 1976 urban black African education entered a continuous cycle of student protesting or attending banned mass funerals. The police arresting and killing more students and further demonstrations supporting arrested students resulting in more students being killed or arrested (Glaser, 2018). According to Christie (1998), student protests disrupted taken-for- granted ideas about school routines, power relations within the school system and the rhythm of teaching and learning. School attendance was sporadic, students physically assaulted or threatened teachers because they were seen as collaborating with the racist government, students who had failed started promoting themselves and students also started disrupting exams and classroom sessions (Christie, 1998; Glaser, 2018). Youth delinquency became rife and students who attended

school were threatened, drugs and alcohol were consumed and sold on school premises, schoolgirls were raped on school premises and schools started being vandalised (Christie, 1998; Glaser, 2016, 2018). Teachers became demotivated and their absence from school started becoming a widespread problem (Christie, 1998). By the 1990s, disruptions in the black African school system had moved from being caused by students to mainly being caused by teachers who used strikes as a coercion tool when their demands were not being met by the government (Glaser, 2018).

Black African parents started moving their children after 1976 to rural public schools that still had stability (Glaser, 2016). According to Seroto (2004), the government had always under catered for rural schools and the increase in school enrolments worsened the poor quality of education that was already being provided by a majority of these schools. Poor quality education, overcrowded classes, high student-teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure and protests by students and teachers left black African education in a state of disrepair (Christie, 1988; Glaser, 2016, 2018). Moses et al. (2017) state that an average black African aged twenty-five (25) years or above in 1993 needed ten (10) more years of education to be on par with a white South African of the same age.

Social class started again to play a major role in the education that black African children received (Glaser, 2016). In the mid-1970s, religious and private schools started illegally admitting students who were not white (Christie, 1995). In 1983, during the reform era, the apartheid government amended the Private Schools Act to allow private schools to admit students from other racial groups in historically white schools (Christie, 1995; Glaser, 2016; Nzimande, 1991). Most students who attended these schools were from upper-middle-class black African families and they were predominately children of black Africans who worked

in the corporate sector (Christie, 1995; Nzimande, 1991). In the same period, a few Indian and Coloured schools also started admitting a small number of black African students (Christie, 1995). Affluent black African parents also had the option of sending their children outside the country or to black African mission schools that still provided quality education (Dlamini, 2013; Krige, 2012; McKeever, 2017). In 1991, historically white public schools started admitting black African students (Christie, 1995). These schools had to give admission preference to white students and black African students were only admitted if they met academic and personal suitability requirements (Christie, 1995). Christie (1995) states that most white public schools used suitability requirements to exclude black African children from impoverished backgrounds. Only black African children with affluent parents could access white public schools (Christie, 1995).

2.4.2. Homelands

The Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 was enacted to establish homelands and the Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 separated homelands according to ethnic groups of black Africans (Geldenhuys, 1981; Heffernan, 2017). There were ten (10) homelands that spread over thirteen per cent (13%) of the land that black Africans could inhabit (Geldenhuys, 1981; Heffernan, 2017; Legassick & Wolpe, 1976). In the 1960s, homelands were used to place black Africans who were forcibly removed from urban areas or from white farms that no longer needed their services because of mechanization (Bank, 1994; Evans, 2012; Jones, 1997; Pickles & Woods, 1992). Homelands also served as labour camps that held black Africans that were not needed in urban areas (Evans, 2012; Legassick & Wolpe, 1976). Black Africans could only leave these areas if they had a contract to work in urban areas or if they were leaving to work on white farms (Evans, 2012). Pickles and Woods (1992) state that

approximately four million black Africans were relocated to homelands between 1960 and 1980. The number of black Africans living in homelands increased from thirty-nine per cent (39%) to fifty-three (53%) per cent in this period. Homelands had little infrastructure or industries, poverty levels were high in these areas and overcrowding affected the ability of black Africans to farm or keep livestock (Pickles & Woods, 1992).

In the late 1960s, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland gained independence from the British authorities (Evans, 2012). This put pressure on the South African government as other European colonial powers were also moving out of Africa (Dugard, 1980; Heffernan, 2017). Homelands were reinvented as independent states for black Africans that were under the guardianship of the South African government (Evans,2012; Geldenhuys, 1981, Jones, 1997). These independent states were transitionary and would be handed over to black Africans when the South African government deemed them ready for self-governance (Evans, 2012; Geldenhuys, 1981, Jones, 1997). Four ethnic states (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) were granted independence (Dugard, 1980; Evans, 2012; Heffernan, 2017). The citizens of the homelands had civil rights in their areas but the homelands were economically dependent on the South African government as they were placed in areas that had little prospects for economic development (Geldenhuys, 1981; Jones, 1997; Southall, 1977).

Government structures in the homelands created opportunities for black Africans to occupy positions that were not accessible to them in South Africa (Bank, 1988; Jones, 1997; Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). Traditional chiefs became ministers and chief ministers in newly-established parliaments (Jones, 1997; Southall, 1977). Government structures further offered black Africans opportunities to be civil servants, members of parliament, managers and to work as professionals (Nzimande, 1991; Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977).

Teachers and nurses, who were mostly female, made up a majority of black Africans in middle-class occupations in the homelands (Nzimande, 1991). Clerical work, which was mostly male-dominated, also contributed significantly to the formation of the black African middle-class (Nzimande, 1991).

Homelands further offered black African entrepreneurs better prospects than in South Africa (Bank, 1994; Jones, 1997; Southall, 1977). The commitment to develop black African entrepreneurs, however, differed between homelands (Bank, 1994). For example, Bophuthatswana and Transkei are commended for adopting policies that encouraged black African entrepreneurship whilst QwaQwa adopted policies that countered black African entrepreneurship (Bank, 1994). Black Africans in homelands had opportunities to acquire land and loans that could be used for commercial farming (Bank, 1994; Jones, 1997; Southall, 1977). Black Africans could also obtain trading licenses and in Transkei, these licences were transferred from white traders who operated in the area to black Africans (Bank, 1994; Peires, 1992; Southall, 1977).

Large corporates were further encouraged to operate in homelands on the condition that they sold shares to local black Africans (Bank, 1994; Pickles & Woods, 1992). According to Bank (1988), this created opportunities for some black African entrepreneurs to participate in the mainstream economy. A group of black African entrepreneurs also emerged from participating in infrastructure projects that were sponsored by the state (Bank, 1988; Jones, 1997; Pickles &Woods, 1992). Manufacturers further received incentives for setting up their businesses in homelands and some black African entrepreneurs moved to homelands to take advantage of these new opportunities (Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977).

Opportunities for social mobility in the homelands were heavily influenced by the social capital that individuals possessed (Bank, 1994; Jones, 1997; Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). Political patronage played a significant role in workplace and business opportunities that individuals attained (Bank, 1994; Jones, 1997; Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). Bank (1988), however, cautions that discussions on black African entrepreneurs in homelands tend to overemphasise structural factors and underemphasise the agency of these entrepreneurs. There were also successful black African entrepreneurs in homelands who were involved in businesses that had no government support such as taxi owners, retailers and those engaged in businesses that involved alcohol (Bank, 1988). Black African entrepreneurs with political patronage were also not immune from competition and changing economic conditions and thus these entrepreneurs still needed to have business acumen to run their businesses successfully (Bank, 1988).

Homelands offered business people an opportunity to set up their businesses at low costs (Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). The salaries offered to most working-class employees were lower than those offered in South Africa for the same positions (Pickles &Woods, 1992). A majority of black Africans who lived in homelands were underprivileged whilst a minority benefited from state contracts and state employment (Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). According to Thompson (2001), approximately eighty per cent (80%) of black Africans who lived in homelands had incomes that were below the minimum living level. Economic inequality in homelands was high and there were clear class differences between elite, middle-class and working-class black Africans (Nzimande, 1991; Pickles & Wood, 1992; Southall, 1977).

2. 4. 3. Entrepreneurs

When the National Party came into power in 1948, regulations were enacted to limit the expansion of black African businesses in urban areas (Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). Black Africans could only trade in townships, own one business and they had to operate their businesses from premises provided by the state (Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). Black Africans were also limited to selling necessities (Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). The state further issued limited trading licenses and this gave rise to illegal traders and a burgeoning informal sector (Maseko, 2000; Riley, 1993). Black African entrepreneurs ranged from traders who were in survivalist businesses that had low barriers of entry and low returns, illegal traders that operated businesses that made high profits and had high barriers of entry-for example, the taxi industry (Bank, 1988). There were also licensed traders who made enough profits to be able to reinvest in their businesses and larger traders who had entered the market early and had made huge profits from their business activities (Bank, 1988).

In 1955, licensed black African entrepreneurs formed the African Chamber of Commerce but this organization disbanded in the1960s because of internal struggles (Maseko, 2000). In 1963, the National Federation Chamber of Commerce (NAFCOC) was formed to represent the interests of licensed black African entrepreneurs who operated in urban areas (Maseko, 2000). NAFCOC started having success with the National Party government in the 1970s as until then the government had wanted black African entrepreneurs to form businesses in the homelands (Maseko, 2000, Riley, 1993; Southall, 2016). Political and economic pressure had compelled the government to start considering reforms in the 1970s (Southall, 2016). Maseko (2000) further states that in the 1970s the National Party government had started considering creating a black African middle-class that would buffer white South Africans from poor black

Africans who formed a majority of the population. NAFCOC sold to the government the idea that it could assist by being a stabilising factor (Maseko, 2000).

In the late 1970s, the government started creating conditions that made it easier for black African entrepreneurs to operate their businesses (Maseko, 2000, Riley, 1993). Some of these reforms included black African entrepreneurs being allowed to own more than one business, to form bigger businesses than they had initially been allowed to and business undertakings that black African entrepreneurs could enter were also increased (Maseko, 2000). After the 1976 student uprising, representatives of white business organizations started putting pressure on the government to allow black Africans to operate small manufacturing and industrial firms in urban areas (Maseko, 2000). A group of organizations that represented the interests of white businesses formed the Urban Foundation and the foundation aimed to assist with improving the lives of black Africans (Maseko, 2000). During this period, NAFCOC established African Bank (1975), African Development and Construction Company (1978) and Black Chain Supermarkets (1978) (Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2016).

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) was also established by the government and the private sector in the 1980s to assist small business owners of all races with loans and share capital (Maseko, 2000, Riley, 1993). Riley (1993) states that the government and white business organizations encouraged black African entrepreneurship but only within the limits that these two groups found acceptable. In 1986, the government also started deregulating the economy and abolishing some Apartheid legislation such as the Group Areas Act (Riley, 1993). These reforms allowed black Africans to access state contracts for infrastructure projects in townships, participate in different business ventures and have opportunities to receive better financing and loans (Maseko, 2000). Some ventures

that were started in this period include the Bonitas Medical Aid Scheme (1982), Lesedi Clinic (1986), Share World Entertainment Centre (1987) and the multi-million-rand buyout of National Sorghum Breweries in 1990 (Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2016)

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The abolishment of the Group Areas Act removed the restriction that only black Africans could trade in the townships (Maseko, 2000, Riley, 1993). Several white-owned companies entered the township through Tripartite companies -Tripcos (Maseko, 2000). Black Africans were allowed to acquire shares in these white-owned companies (Maseko, 2000, Riley, 1993). Tripcos were also introduced in homelands when large chain stores entered these areas with black Africans being allowed to buy shares in the chain stores (Bank, 1998; Mare, 1978). Mare (1978) states that it was not always clear who the black African shareholders of these Tripcos were. However, senior government officials and executive members of different chambers of commerce were influential in negotiating these deals (Bank, 1988). Influential business people were better placed to take advantage of reforms in urban areas and some managed to enter the mainstream economy through Tripcos (Maseko, 2000).

Most small and medium-sized black African entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas were adversely affected by these changes (Bank, 1988, Riley, 1993). A significant number of new trading licenses were issued in this period leading to intense competition and falling profits (Riley, 1993). The taxi industry, which is the most dominant black African business in South Africa, became beset by taxi wars because of this increased competition (Maseko, 2000). Furthermore, customers preferred to purchase goods at chain stores and only purchased small items from local shops further reducing the profits of these traders (Bank, 1988, Riley, 1993). Traders were also at the mercy of chain stores and they suffered when these stores increased

their service offerings (Bank, 1988). For example, key-cutting shops were adversely affected when certain chain stores started offering key-cutting services (Bank, 1988).

Maseko (2000) argues that the progression of black African entrepreneurs during the apartheid era was complex. The agency of black African entrepreneurs, the bargaining power of different black African chambers of commerce, assistance from white business organizations, homeland economic policies and political reforms all played a significant role in how this class evolved (Bank, 1988; Maseko, 2000). The upward mobility of black African entrepreneurs also depended on them having cordial relationships with their communities so as not to be labelled as sell-outs for taking advantage of economic reforms (Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2004). Community members sometimes chose to boycott businesses of alleged sell-outs; some entrepreneurs had their properties torched and those who were unfortunate were torched with their families for being collaborators (Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2004).

2.4.4. The Rise of Income Inequality

One of the aims of the National Party in 1948 was to close the income gap between Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking white South Africans (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Nzimande, 1991; Thompson, 2001). Thompson (2001) states that the government became Afrikanerized after the National Party came into power. Afrikaans-speaking whites were appointed to government positions, they were awarded lucrative state contracts and state funds were channelled into Afrikaner banks (Nzimande, 1991; Thompson, 2001). White farmers also received substantial state subsidies to mechanize their farms (Thompson, 2001). The South African economy grew from 1948 to 1970 and in this period white South Africans of all classes experienced upward mobility (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001).

By 1970, the income gap between Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking whites had significantly shrunk with Afrikaners dominating industries and top government positions that were previously the domain of English-speaking white South Africans (Coupe, 1996; Thompson, 2001). An urban Afrikaner middle-class also grew in this period (Coupe, 1996; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2016).

White South Africans continued to be paid inflated salaries that were subsidized by the repressed wages of black Africans (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Nzimande, 1991; Thompson, 2001). For example, white mineworkers earned twenty-one times (1:21) the salaries of black African mineworkers in 1970 (Thompson, 2001). The wages of black African mineworkers had also declined over time and they were lower in real terms in 1970 when compared to the level they were in 1911(Thompson, 2001). By the 1970s, white South Africans occupied a majority of skilled, technical and managerial positions whilst a majority of black Africans worked as unskilled labourers (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Nzimande, 1991; Thompson, 2001). Income inequality rose significantly between black Africans and white South Africans in the period 1948 to 1970 (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). The income of the top ten per cent (10%) of South Africans in the 1980s was estimated to comprise fifty-eight per cent (58%) of the national income and the income of the bottom forty per cent (40%) comprised six per cent (6%) of the national income (Thompson, 2001).

In the late 1950s and early 1960s the National Party government built urban townships to implement the racial prescripts of the Group Areas of 1950 (Nzimande, 1991; Wale, 2013). Townships had better facilities when compared to homelands (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). The government could not afford to build houses for all black Africans who lived in urban areas (Glücksmann, 2010; Simons, 1986; Wale, 2013). As a result, black Africans who were

born in urban areas, resided in urban areas continuously for fifteen (15) years or who had worked for the same employer for at least ten years were given section 10 rights (Glücksmann, 2010; Simons, 1986; Wale, 2013). The Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act of 1952 further required black Africans above the age of 16 to carry passes that showed their residential status (Glücksmann, 2010; Simons, 1968; Wale, 2013).

Black Africans with section 10 rights received preferential treatment when it came to employment in urban areas as they were regarded as permanent residents of these areas (Glücksmann, 2010; Simons, 1986; Wale, 2013). These black Africans could access better-paying jobs and they also did not have to leave urban areas when they were unemployed (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Black African males who did not have section 10 rights were regarded as temporary residents of townships and they were only allowed to stay in urban areas until the duration of their employment contracts (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). These black Africans were accommodated in hostels built for single men and they were channelled by labour bureaus to jobs and industries that paid low salaries (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Nzimande, 1991; Simons, 1986). Blacks who worked in urban areas illegally were also exploited by employers and paid low salaries (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Hence, there was income inequality between black Africans who were born in urban areas and those born in homelands (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010).

Furthermore, black African women had no legal capacity during the apartheid era and they were under the authority of men (Simon, 1986). Single black African women could not be allocated housing in urban townships and they could only stay in these areas if their parents had section 10 rights (Simon, 1986). Moreover, women who lived in homelands were not allowed to be in urban areas for more than seventy-two (72) hours (Glücksmann, 2010;

Simons, 1986; Wale, 2013). These women relied on male relatives to send them remittances as there were limited employment opportunities in rural villages (Yawitch, 1984). Black African women who were not educated had the least opportunity for upward mobility (Matshazi, 1996). They were black Africans in a country that was dominated by racist ideology, women in a country that promoted patriarchy and they had low levels of education in a country that valued those who were educated (Matshazi, 1996).

From the 1940s, there was steady growth in the mechanization of different sectors of the economy (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). Mechanization was regarded as a viable solution to replace unreliable black African labour (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). Automation made it easier for employers to fragment skilled jobs into semi-skilled jobs and this necessitated the hiring of better-educated black Africans (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Nzimande, 1991). A majority of unskilled black Africans were retrenched (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). The unemployment rate of black Africans doubled between 1960 and 1970 and poverty levels within the black African community also increased (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). White South Africans further started entering middle-class occupations in this period (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). The colour bar floated upwards and as white men moved up opportunities also opened for black Africans in semi-skilled jobs (Nzimande, 1991). Income inequality within black African communities increased as a minority of educated black Africans experienced upward mobility and a majority downward mobility (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010).

2.4.5. The Rise of Industrial Psychology and Personnel Management

2.4.5.1. Industrial Psychology and Personnel Management

In 1946, the National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) was established to promote the use of psychology and scientific methods in personnel management (Coupe, 1996; Louw, 2021; Nzimande, 1991). The organization was co-funded by the state and private sector (Coupe, 1996). The divergent needs of the state and private sector posed challenges to this organization (Coupe, 1996). The government wanted its policy of apartheid to be supported by empirical evidence that there were differences in the intelligence of workers from different races (Coupe, 1996). Employers, on the other hand, wanted scientific evidence on how they could efficiently use black African labour in positions above the unskilled level to meet the needs of the growing economy (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991). The NIPR could not find scientific evidence regarding differences in the intelligence of different race groups but instead found that psychometric tests used at that time were sensitive to educational attainment (Coupe, 1996). Researchers working for the NIPR also argued that the work behaviour of black Africans could not be understood without taking into account the wider social, political, psychological and institutional contexts (Louw, 2021).

In the late 1950s, the NIPR courted the full wrath of the National Party government when it suggested that performance differences on psychometric tests of Afrikaans and English-speaking South Africans were due to the simplicity of Afrikaner culture (Coupe, 1996; Louw, 2021). Coupe (1996) notes wryly that this logic was found acceptable when it was applied to black Africans but it was deemed to be offensive when it was used for Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans. Prominent Industrial Psychologists started moving into industry after

the NIPR fell out with the government (Coupe, 1996; Louw, 2021). They were hired by industry to improve productivity and most of these Psychologists were followers of the human relations movement (Coupe, 1996; Louw, 2021; Nzimande, 1991). They believed that productivity could be increased through good human relations (Coupe, 1996; Louw, 2021; Nzimande, 1991).

Industrial Psychologists during this period focused on studying the culture of different racial groups to explain differences in productivity levels and work-related competencies (Coupe, 1996; Louw, 2021; Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985). Industrial Psychologists advocated that black Africans had to be treated differently in the workplace because of their cultural upbringing (Watts, 1985). Black Africans were considered to be suitable for semi-skilled occupations and unsuitable for middle-class occupations because of their socialization (Allen, 1984). Industrial Psychologists argued that black Africans were not socialized to have a logical sequential mind and as a result, they had no conceptual understanding of time, planning and bureaucracy (Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981). Black Africans were also argued to not be good leaders as they lacked objectivity and a sense of fairness (Allen, 1984; Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981). Also, when black Africans could execute some of the work performed by white South Africans, they were seen as lacking the analytical ability to explain the underlying mechanics of their actions (Allen, 1984; Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981; Erwee, 1988).

According to Coldwell and Moerdyk (1981), black Africans did not also understand the production-orientated nature of the industrial world and they were distressed when they were treated like tools and not people. They took offence at “trivial” matters such as being called “boys” and they did not understand that being insulted, shouted at, abused and dehumanized

was a “trivial” matter in western culture (Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981). Therefore, black Africans demonstrated that they were group-orientated and not achievement-orientated (Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981; Erwee, 1988). Furthermore, black Africans lacked an innate sense of responsibility, autonomy, commitment, a western work ethic, self-esteem and drive (Coldwell & Moerdyk, 1981; Human & Hofmeyr, 1984; Orpen, 1979; Schutte, 1982). Black Africans also lacked innovation and creativity, assertiveness, interpersonal skills, confidence and time management skills (Watts, 1985). Moreover, black Africans lacked verbal and written communication skills or the ability to communicate succinctly (Gouws, 1980; Wella, 1983).

Additionally, the academic training of black Africans even when they had degrees was inferior to that of white people (Gouws, 1980; Wella, 1983). Black Africans who had quantitatively more qualifications than their white counterparts were not as educationally enriched as white South Africans because of the quality of their education (Wella, 1983). Educated black Africans further struggled to translate the theoretical aspects of their degrees into the practical world (Watts, 1985). Black Africans unlike white South Africans, were also socialized in environments that did not stimulate their aptitude in technical, managerial, professional or business vocations (Watts, 1985). Hence, even when they had work experience and educational qualifications, black Africans had to be deculturized as they did not have the mannerisms and social habits that were needed to succeed in upper-level positions (Watts, 1985). Their understanding of western culture was further hampered by the fact that they did not interact socially with white peers and they had limited opportunities to learn the norms of European cultures (Wella, 1983).

Black Africans were regarded by industry as living in "a world of witchcraft, witches and wizards" (Coupe, 1996, p.65). Therefore, there was a need for a liaison between rational production-orientated white supervisors and irrational group-orientated black African workers (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991 Wella, 1983). In the 1940s and 1950s, Izinduna played this role but they were displaced by labour bureaus, municipal compounds and later townships that accommodated black Africans from different areas (Nzimande, 1991). Black Africans with matric or degrees were hired as personnel officers to advise management on black African issues (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991; Wella, 1983). These black African personnel officers were also supposed to assume the role of shop stewards so to discourage black Africans from forming or joining unions (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991).

The performance of the South African economy between 1950 and 1970 also attracted foreign investment and multinational companies (Nattrass & Seekings, 2010; Thompson, 2001). In the 1960s, the Sharpeville massacre and the violent methods that were being used to suppress the political activity of black Africans generated an international outcry (Thompson, 2001). There were calls in the international community for South Africa to be economically sanctioned (Thompson, 2001). International companies operating in South Africa were reluctant to leave the country and to pacify their critics; they looked for ways to treat black African labour better (Coupe, 1996). Black African trade unions had also been dismantled when the National Party government was suppressing political activity (Nzimande, 1991) but black Africans redressed some of their grievances through acts of sabotage such as theft and not conforming to productivity targets (Coupe, 1996). A need arose for supervisors to be trained on how to manage employees properly to minimize some of this hostile behaviour (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991). Nzimande (1991) further states that with an increasing workforce, it became more complex to manage the recruitment and selection of black African

workers and the associated administrative work. Hence, personnel departments grew exponentially in the 1960s and the number of black African personnel officers also increased (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991).

In the 1970s, there was an increase in black African labour unrest and strikes in the workplace (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2014). Personnel departments had to shift their focus from recruitment and training to labour relations (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991). Industrial Psychologists had not equipped themselves to deal with this labour unrest as they had been against trade unions operating in the workplace (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991). The paternalistic attitude adopted by Industrial Psychologists toward black Africans had also blinded them to changes that were taking place in society (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991). It was challenging to argue that black Africans had no logical sequential minds when they were organizing nationwide strikes; the popularity of the black consciousness movement called into question claims that black Africans had no self-esteem because they had accepted their inferior position in society and there was a realization that paternalistic attitudes fuelled rather quelled labour tension (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991).

Personnel Management practitioners were hired to manage relations between black African workers and employers (Coupe, 1996; Nzimande, 1991). Personnel management eclipsed Industrial psychology in importance as the 1970s and 1980s were characterised by labour unrest and the skills of personnel practitioners were highly sought after (Nzimande, 1991). Industrial Psychologists were limited to working in recruitment and training (Nzimande, 1991). According to Thompson (2001), the fight against apartheid intensified in the 1980s and protests became a common feature in the lives of black Africans. The struggles that were taking place outside the workplace also influenced relations in the workplace (Nzimande,

1991; Thompson, 2001). Trade unions gained power in the 1980s and shop stewards replaced black African personnel officers as the spokespeople for black African workers (Nzimande, 1991). Black African personnel officers became representatives of management and they had to adopt strategies that would allow them to co-exist with black African workers who were militant and white management that expected them to subdue this militancy (Human, 1981; Human & Hofmeyr, 1984; Nzimande, 1991; Wella, 1983).

2.4.5.2. Introduction of Affirmative Action

International companies operating in South Africa had also started lobbying for job reservations to be abolished because of skills shortages (Thompson, 2001; Wella, 1983). These companies committed themselves in the 1970s to provide workplaces that did not practice discrimination and they became signatories to codes of fair labour practices such as the Sullivan principles, the Canadian Code and the European Economic Code of Ethics (Wella, 1983). These companies also committed that they would recruit, train and promote black Africans into managerial and skilled jobs (Wella, 1983). The Wiehahn commission was also established in 1977 to investigate how the Labour Relations system in South Africa could be made more effective (Schutte, 1982; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2016; Wella, 1983). The Commission recommended that job reservations should be abolished and black African trade unions should be recognized (Wella, 1983).

In the 1970s, there was an increase in management advancement programmes that were aimed at preparing black Africans for managerial and skilled roles (Gouws, 1980; Hofmeyr & Human, 1984; Nzimande, 1986; Wella, 1983). These programmes were also designed to address the underperformance of black Africans who were already occupying managerial

roles (Erwee, 1988; Gouws, 1980; Hofmeyr & Human, 1984; Wella, 1983). The curriculum of these programmes was premised on the assumptions that black Africans were disadvantaged in the workplace because they came from impoverished backgrounds, they were recipients of inferior education and their cultural background was incompatible with the demands of western orientated workplaces or the "white world" (Erwee, 1988; Gouws, 1980; Hofmeyr & Human, 1984; Human, 1981; Schutte, 1982; Wella, 1983). Proponents of these programmes such as Badenhorst (1981) argued that black Africans had to prove themselves before being allowed to occupy middle-class occupations. Management advancement programmes included courses such as achievement motivation training, behaviour modelling, business skills and communication skills (Badenhorst, 1981; Erwee, 1988; Schutte, 1982; Wella, 1983).

The progression of black Africans into middle-class occupations was slow and most black Africans in middle-class occupations occupied positions that serviced other black Africans such as personnel management, black African marketing and public relations (Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). Southall (2004) states that in 1990, only three per cent (3%) of black Africans occupied managerial positions and eleven per cent (11%) occupied professional positions. Black Africans were deemed to be more suitable for routine instead of think work, for human relations rather than technical work and for specialist instead of managerial work (Watts, 1985). Human and Human (1989) state that as opportunities opened up for black Africans the criteria of exclusion shifted from race and proxies such as culture and education were used to discriminate against black Africans. According to Human and Human (1989), the slow progress in implementing Affirmative Action measures highlighted the need to study how members of powerful groups maintained their power and how members of subordinate groups tried to change their position. The

discontinuation of job reservation laws and attempts made at implementing Affirmative Action (AA) measures further demonstrated that it was taken for granted in South Africa that only white people belonged in middle-class occupations and this social practice continued even when it was not enforced by the law (Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985).

Members of powerful groups adopted different strategies that slowed down the progress of implementing Affirmative Action measures (Human & Human, 1989). Executives signed codes of fair labour practice and committed to implementing Affirmative Action measures (Human & Human, 1989; Wella, 1983). Wella (1983) notes that most companies that were signatories of these codes had no Affirmative Actions plans, tangible timelines or targets. These executives could pay lip service to Affirmative Action as there were no penalties for not implementing these codes (Human & Human, 1989; Wella, 1983). Furthermore, a minority of black Africans were hired for window dressing as executives and given high salaries but no responsibilities (Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). Human Resource Management functions further provided management development programmes that were based on racial stereotypes and these stereotypes were presented as academic facts (Badenhorst, 1981; Erwee, 1998; Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1986, 1991). Human Resources practitioners also advocated that changes should be implemented more slowly to avoid backlash from white employees and inter-racial conflict (Badenhorst, 1981; Charoux, 1987; Watts, 1985).

Supervisors and managers maintained their dominance by arguing that they could not trust the competence of black Africans as they had demonstrated that they were poor performers (Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1991; Wella, 1983). These supervisors and managers managed this lack of trust by closely supervising the work of black Africans, assigning

menial work to black Africans or executing tasks that were supposed to be completed by their black African charges (Nzimande, 1991; Wella, 1983). Supervisors sometimes accused black Africans of being poor performers in jobs that had no performance contracts or job descriptions (Nzimande, 1991; Wella, 1983). White peers maintained their dominance by arguing that standards had dropped since black Africans had been hired as they were lazy and irresponsible (Charoux, 1987; Nzimande, 1991; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2014; Wella, 1983). Working-class white South Africans were also crude and rude when interacting with black Africans in middle-class occupations (Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983).

2.4.6. Exiled Black Africans

After the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, the government clamped down on black African political opposition (Nzimande, 1991; Thompson, 2001). The African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) were the most popular black African political parties of that time and these parties were banned (Lissoni, 2008). Political activists were arrested and some fled into exile (Suttner, 2003). There had been a small number of black Africans who left South Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, to go study and who never returned (Lissoni, 2008; Schleicher, 2011; Steyn & Grant, 2006). A majority of black Africans, however, left the country in this period when they were forced into political exile (Lissoni, 2008).

The ANC was better resourced than the PAC in exile (Lissoni, 2008; Suttner, 2003). The organization managed a small-scale government that looked after the health, education, social welfare and safety needs of its members (Lissoni, 2008; Suttner, 2003). The ANC also had a presence in different countries around the world and it is estimated that its members were

spread across twenty-five (25) to thirty-five (35) countries (Lissoni, 2008; Suttner, 2003). Black Africans who went into exile in the 1960s and early 1970s were mostly educated adults who were highly politicised (Suttner, 2003). Schleicher (2011) argues that the exile experience was not uniform and it differed according to where people resided and the ANC activities that they were involved in. For some, it was a harsh experience full of trauma whilst for others, it opened up professional opportunities that were not available for black Africans in South Africa (Schleicher, 2011; Steyn & Grant, 2006).

After the 1976 student uprising, a large number of black African youth left the country to go into political exile (Schleicher, 2011). Most of these youth were recipients of Bantu education, and unlike the generation before, they were mostly semi-literate (Govender & Fataar, 2015; Steyn & Grant, 2006). Some of these youth were unaccompanied minors who were too young to receive military training and they had to be channelled into the education system (Govender & Fataar, 2015). Serote (1992) states that before 1976 children in exile attended school in their host countries and were sent to other countries for tertiary education. After 1976, the number of school-going children increased exponentially and the ANC established the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in Tanzania in 1978 to address this crisis (Govender & Fataar, 2015; Serote, 1992). In the mid-1980s, the ANC education system was further strained when there was an influx of school-going children who were fleeing from South Africa due to their involvement in the national struggle (Serote, 1992). These youth were the products of the "freedom now and education later" movement and they were also mostly semi-literate (Serote, 1992).

As the fight against apartheid intensified in the 1980s , the government responded to this insurgence by declaring a state of emergency and using the military to manage black African

townships (Thompson, 2001). There was an increase in violent political demonstrations, strikes and acts of sabotage (Thompson, 2001). The government also invaded neighbouring countries that the ANC used as routes to access South Africa and this led to the ANC being expelled from some of these neighbouring countries (Serote, 1992; Thompson, 2001). In 1986, the increasing acts of violence led to the international community imposing economic sanctions on South Africa (Thompson, 2001). South Africa experienced an economic crisis that prompted total reform (Peires, 2007; Thompson, 2001). In 1990, political movements were unbanned, political prisoners were released and South Africans in exile could return home (Kropiwinicki, 2014; Serote, 1992; Steyn & Grant, 2006).

Kropiwinicki (2014) estimates that between fifteen thousand (15 000) and seventeen thousand (17 000) exiles returned to South Africa in the period between 1990 and 1995. According to Steyn and Grant (2006), individuals who returned from political exile were not a homogeneous group. Some had benefitted from scholarships and were professionally trained (Kropiwinicki, 2014; Serote, 1992; Steyn & Grant, 2006). Others had lived in multiple host countries and they were international citizens who were used to living with people from different cultures (Schleicher, 2011; Steyn & Grant, 2006). Some members of the ANC were also exposed to managing bureaucratic structures and they were politically mature due to the experience they acquired garnering support for the ANC all over the world (Schleicher, 2011). For these members of the exiled community, their education, experience, training and political connections placed them in a better position to take advantage of opportunities that were newly available in South Africa (Schleicher, 2011; Steyn & Grant, 2006).

Steyn and Grant (2006) state that young people who left South Africa after 1976 and who went into the military were less prepared to function in a South Africa that had a high unemployment rate. The ANC had provided for the necessities of their members in exile and these individuals were now expected to fend for themselves (Kropiwinicki, 2014). For these returned exiles, making a living in South Africa became a challenge (Kropiwinicki, 2014). Nattrass and Seekings (2010) state that by 1993 the intra-racial Gini-coefficient for black Africans had risen to 60% with some black Africans experiencing upward mobility in this period whilst others struggled to survive.

2. 5. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed how the social mobility trajectories of black Africans were influenced by political, social and economic changes. Black Africans in different historical eras faced structural barriers and opportunities to upward mobility that were unique to their particular historical period. This chapter further demonstrated that black Africans did not occupy the same social class location and this influenced how they experienced structural changes. Furthermore, the chapter discussed how state policies facilitated racialised economic inequality that is currently prevalent in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT: POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The early days of the political transformation that took place in 1994 were characterised by optimism (Iqani, 2017; Wale, 2013). South Africa was reimagined as a "new South Africa" or a "rainbow nation" with equal opportunities for all its citizens (Iqani, 2017; Wale, 2013). The emergence of the new black African middle-class was also celebrated as a positive step that indicated that the country was economically transforming (Iqani, 2017). Thus, South Africa was seen as having shifted from an economic system that had institutionalised structural barriers for some of its citizens to a meritocracy that embraced all citizens (Iqani, 2017; Wale, 2013). The optimism of the early days has been tempered by the reality that in post-apartheid South Africa black Africans still make up a majority of those who are economically disadvantaged (World Bank, 2018).

This chapter is going to review the literature concerning the social mobility of black Africans in post-apartheid South Africa. The chapter aims to demonstrate that social mobility opportunities for black Africans have improved due to societal socioeconomic changes but structures of privilege have also remained intact as a majority of black Africans do not have sufficient capital to meet requirements in transforming fields (Hardy, 2014).

3.2. CHANGES AT A SOCIETAL LEVEL

According to Posel (2010), one of the biggest shifts in post-apartheid South Africa was the visibility of upwardly mobile black Africans. The visibility of upwardly mobile black Africans disrupted taken-for- granted beliefs regarding who had the right to consume middle-class goods and services (Iqani, 2017). A descriptor of black diamonds emerged in the early years of post-apartheid South Africa to describe a new segment of black African consumers who were accessing new products (Kitis et al., 2018). A societal narrative also emerged that the black African middle-class was a product of the post-apartheid era (Khunou, 2015; Mabandla, 2015, Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2014). According to Fernandes (2000), economic liberalization in India also resulted in a similar narrative of a new Indian middle-class. Fernandes (2000) argued that this narrative reflected a conceptual discourse that described an ideal middle-class Indian consumer citizen rather than actual new entrants into the middle class.

The narrative of the new black African middle-class ignored the historical, sociological and economic background of this group (Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015, Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2014). Furthermore, this narrative facilitated discourses that simplified the social mobility experiences of black Africans (Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015, Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2014). Accounts of how black Africans entered the middle class tended to underplay the agency of black Africans and overemphasize structural factors (Kitis et al., 2018). The black diamond descriptor over time came to be associated with the conspicuous consumption of the new black middle-class (Iqani, 2017; Kitis et al., 2018; Morwe, 2014; Posel, 2010; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). This narrative dominated public discourse and stimulated academic work regarding the black African middle-class (Burger et

al., 2015b; Chevalier, 2015; de Coninck, 2018; Donaldson et al., 2013; Iqani, 2017; Khunou, 2015; Kitis et al. et al., 2018; Morwe, 2014; Ngoma, 2015a, Ngoma, 2015b; Posel, 2010; Steinfield & Scott, 2013; Wale, 2013).

3.2.1. New Black African Middle-Class

Scholars argue that the narrative regarding the conspicuous consumption of the new black African middle-class reflected societal politics regarding social class distinctions (Iqani, 2017; Kitis et al., 2018; Morwe, 2014; Posel, 2010; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). Debates that arose in the early years of the post-apartheid era aimed to prescribe how black Africans should manifest their social class as new entrants to the middle-class (Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015; Mabandla, 2015, Maseko, 2000; Southall, 2014). These debates were meant to influence the cultural ideal of a good and competent middle-class black African (Iqani, 2017; Kitis et al., 2018; Posel, 2010; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). Swidler (1986) states that during unsettled times, such as the early days of the political transformation in South Africa, ideologies play an important role in organizing social life as they offer individuals who are practising unfamiliar ideas answers on how to act. Different interest groups compete to make their worldviews dominant in society (Steyn & Foster, 2008).

The media is recognized as a platform that is used by different groups to generate and maintain unquestioned reality that comes to be regarded as common sense by the public (Brink, 2014; Saunders, 1990). When dominant ideologies become common sense in society, they legitimise power structures (Deer, 2014). Scholars analysed media reports to understand the discourses used by upwardly mobile black Africans to legitimise their position in the middle class and the discourses used by members of dominant groups to maintain their

position (Iqani, 2017; Kitis. et al., 2018; Steyn & Foster, 2008). Media narratives that disparage middle-class black Africans, with elite black Africans getting most of the brunt, have come to dominate public discourse in South Africa (de Coninck, 2018; Kitis et al., 2018; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). These narratives are accepted as common-sense and they are hardly ever questioned (de Coninck, 2018; Kitis et al., 2018; Steinfield & Scott, 2013).

Kitis et al. (2018) state that the terms black diamonds, black middle-class, and tenderpreneurs (individuals who make a living from government tenders) are used interchangeably in public discourse. Upwardly mobile black Africans are deemed as conspicuous consumers because of the black diamond label or as corrupt because of being tenderpreneurs (Kitis et al., 2018). Black African elites are further differentiated from other elites in South Africa (Steinfield & Scott, 2013; Wale, 2013). Black African elites are perceived as having the same material wealth as the established elite but not the class, sophistication and morals of this group (Kitis et al., 2018). It is widely believed that black African elites acquired their wealth through immorally benefitting from corrupt government contracts (Kitis et al., 2018; Morwe, 2014; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). Furthermore, consumption patterns of black African elites that are narrated as grotesque do not raise an eyebrow when practised by members of other race groups (Iqani, 2017; Kitis et al., 2018; Morwe, 2014; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). For instance, Steinfield and Scott (2013) found that participants in their study from different race groups perceived that white South Africans bought luxury goods for their quality whilst black Africans bought the same goods for ostentatious display.

According to Canham and Williams (2017), middle-class black Africans in post-apartheid South Africa live under the scrutiny of the white gaze and the black gaze. The black gaze monitors boundaries of acceptable black African conduct whilst the white gaze emphasizes

the racial inferiority of black Africans (Canham & Williams, 2017). Media reports written from the lens of the black gaze characterized upwardly mobile black Africans as race traitors and sell-outs who were forsaking their communities and adopting the lifestyle of the white middle-class (Iqani, 2017; Kitis et al., 2018; Steyn & Foster, 2008). Media reports narrated from a white gaze characterized upwardly mobile black Africans as financially irresponsible, morally corrupt, and devoid of personal agency (Canham & Williams, 2017; Iqani, 2017; Kitis et al., 2018; Steyn & Foster, 2008). These narratives are coupled with a moral perspective that questions whether upwardly mobile black Africans are displaying appropriate etiquette when ostentatiously spending their money whilst other poor black Africans are starving (Kitis et al., 2018; Morwe, 2014; Steinfield & Scott, 2013; Steyn & Foster, 2008). Moral questions are couched in terms of racial loyalty and public propriety to justify the appropriateness of questioning the consumption of black Africans (Steinfield & Scott, 2013).

Upwardly mobile black Africans have also put forth a counter-narrative that does not enjoy the same prominence as narratives from the black and white gaze. This counter-narrative promotes consumption as an enactment of agency and freedom (Iqani, 2015; Morwe, 2014; Posel, 2010; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). According to this narrative, the white gaze seeks to impose constraints that are reminiscent of the apartheid era regarding how black Africans ought to spend their money and the leisure activities that they should enjoy (Iqani, 2015; Morwe, 2014). The black gaze criticizes upwardly mobile black Africans who engage in middle-class activities and lifestyles as not being proud to be black Africans (Chipkin, 2015; Iqani, 2015; Morwe, 2014). Individuals who argue that consumption is an emancipatory act mention that upwardly mobile black Africans do not need to adopt a suffer together mentality or a poor black person stigma nor do they need to accept narratives that black Africans are

inferior (Chipkin, 2015; Iqani, 2015; Morwe, 2014). A black African person can be proud of his or her black African heritage and simultaneously enjoy economic prosperity that arises from merit and hard work (Chipkin, 2015; Iqani, 2015).

3.2. 2. Black Tax

According to de Coninck (2018), discussions regarding the conspicuous consumption of the new black African middle-class reflected inter-racial discussions during the early years of the post-apartheid era. Current discussions have shifted to intra-racial conversations and focus on the normative socio-economic responsibilities of middle-class black Africans towards less advantaged black Africans (de Coninck, 2018; Steinfield & Scott, 2013). In post-apartheid South Africa, the colloquial term black tax emerged to describe a phenomenon where the social obligations of black Africans to provide financial support to their extended families increased due to societal changes in socioeconomic structures (Magubane, 2017, Msibi, 2020).

According to Mangoma and Wilson-Prangley (2019), discussions on black tax reflect an ongoing negotiation between traditional norms of collectivism and growing individualism in black African communities. Participants who financially assisted family members across different studies unanimously agreed that they were sacrificing their ambitions to meet the needs of their families (Magubane, 2017; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Msibi, 2020; Ngoma, 2016a; Sibiya, 2018). Sacrifices that these research participants made included foregoing advancing their education; not financially investing at levels that they found comfortable and accumulating unmanageable debt to meet the needs of their beneficiaries (Magubane, 2017; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Msibi, 2020; Ngoma, 2016a, Sibiya,

2018). Financially assisting family members was also perceived as stressful when family members expected more than what the benefactor could give, beneficiaries felt entitled to the financial assistance or when there was not a clear agreement on when the arrangement would end (Magubane, 2017; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Msibi, 2020; Sibiya, 2018). Given that the practice of black tax could be experienced as a burden, studies also explored the rationale behind why research participants chose to assist their families (Magubane, 2017; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Msibi, 2020). These studies found that participants used socially embedded scripts that defined their rights, duties and obligations towards their families to explain their behaviour (Magubane, 2017; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Msibi, 2020). Research participants in these studies stated that they had observed family members assisting each other or they had been assisted by family; there was an implicit expectation within the family that advantaged family members assisted those that were struggling and it was also explicitly communicated to benefactors that they had to put the needs of the family first when they start working (Magubane, 2017; Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019; Msibi, 2020).

Msibi (2019) further found that participants in her study aligned assisting family members to prescriptions of different belief systems. These belief systems included African culture (honouring ancestors or meeting traditional obligations of a firstborn child) and Christianity (honouring parents and assisting the less fortunate). Mangoma and Wilson-Prangley (2019) also found that research participants in their study indicated that they derived a sense of satisfaction in improving the lives of others and their financial assistance facilitated better relationships with family members. Assisting family members also reflected what some participants believed about what makes people good. These participants perceived themselves

to be humane as they could not ignore the suffering of others (Fongwa, 2019; Ngoma, 2016a).

The dominant narrative regarding black tax in South Africa currently overemphasises the obligation that middle-class black Africans have to address inherited economic disadvantages in their families and underemphasizes that individuals make the choice to assist family members (Mangoma & Wilson-Prangley, 2019). According to Sibiya (2019), the term tax suggests that assisting struggling family members is an obligation that is fulfilled involuntarily. There were participants in some studies who perceived this practice as an abuse of cultural practices by beneficiaries (Mangoma & Wilson- Prangley, 2019; Sibiya, 2018). Some of these black Africans moved to areas outside the townships to manage financial requests or they cut financial ties with those who were not in their inner circle (Chipkin, 2012; Modisha, 2008).

Miyamoto (2017) states that societal changes in socioeconomic structures lead to increased individualism in some societies whilst in other societies social obligations increase as the socioeconomic position of individuals improve. Individuals who are upwardly mobile and who perceive that poverty and wealth are a result of individual characteristics such as hard work are more likely to move toward individualism (Piff et al., 2018). Miyamoto (2017) further states that in East Asian cultures, societal changes in socioeconomic structures have led to a dual focus on both communal and individualistic ways of perceiving the world. Thus, different cultural meaning systems influence how different groups can manifest their social class as there are different cultural ideals of what makes a person good (Miyamoto, 2017).

3.3. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL MOBILITY

3.3.1. Objective Social Mobility

The World Bank (2018) separates the South African population into five social classes that are based on the likelihood of individuals falling into poverty. The South African population (58, 78 million) is made up of the chronic poor (49%), transient poor (13%), vulnerable (14%), middle-class (20%), and elites (4%) (World Bank, 2018). The chronic poor are characterized by enduring poverty, the transient poor go in and out of poverty, the vulnerable meet their basic needs but are at risk of falling into poverty, the middle-class have some capacity to withstand financial shocks, and the elites have a standard of living that is way above that of ordinary South Africans (Schotte et al., 2017; World Bank, 2018).

Black Africans have eighty per cent (80%) representation in the total population and they make up ninety-five per cent (95%) of the chronic poor, eighty-four per cent (84%) of the transient poor and ninety-one (91%) of the vulnerable (World Bank, 2018). Although income inequality is still racially-based in South Africa, there has been an improvement in black African representation in the middle-class (50%) and elite groups (24%) since 1994 (World Bank, 2018). Black Africans, however, are still under-represented in these groups (World Bank, 2018). Political transformation in South Africa exacerbated income inequality within the black African community and this inequality has grown to levels that are greater than in the country (Turok, 2018). For instance, black Africans made up forty-two (42%) per cent of the richest 5% households in 2017 and ninety-one per cent (91%) of the poorest 60% households in the same year (Makgetla, 2020).

According to Zoch (2015), inequality is regarded as tolerable in society if children have equal opportunities for upward mobility. In a country with equal opportunities, a person's efforts rather than their characteristics determine their economic prosperity (Piraino, 2015; World Bank, 2018; Zoch, 2015). In countries where there is high-income inequality, children are likely to attain the same occupational levels, income and education as their parents when they grow up (Piraino, 2015; World Bank, 2018; Zoch, 2015). This is also the case in South Africa where there is low intergenerational mobility and high-income inequality (Piraino, 2015; World Bank, 2018; Zoch, 2015). Inherited circumstances are the main determinants of social mobility (Piraino, 2015; World Bank, 2018; Zoch, 2015).

Educational attainment, employment in the high-skilled labour market and race were the prime contributors to income inequality in South Africa (Louw et al., 2007; World Bank, 2018). Children growing up in lower-income households in South Africa have a fifty-two per cent (52%) probability of finishing primary school whilst children from high-income homes have an eighty-eight (88%) per cent probability of finishing primary school (World Bank, 2018; Zoch, 2015). Children who have mothers with matric were also more likely to attain primary school education when compared with children who had parents who did not attain primary school education (Zoch, 2015). In South Africa, the income level of parents plays a significant role in predicting whether children will finish high school or access tertiary education (World Bank, 2018; Zoch, 2015). Children growing up in low-income households are less likely to complete high school (19%) when compared to children from upper-middle-class households (82%) (Zoch, 2015). Children from low-income backgrounds, who have parents who did not complete primary school education, have less than a one per cent (1%) chance of accessing tertiary education (Zoch, 2015).

Furthermore, white children and children of Asian/Indian descent are more likely to experience upward mobility when compared to black African children (World Bank, 2018). This is because white South Africans make up fifty-seven per cent (57%) of the elite group and twenty-eight per cent (28%) of the middle-class whilst people of Asian/Indian descent make up seven per cent (7%) of the middle-class and eleven per cent (11%) of the elite ground (World Bank, 2018). The influence of race as a predictor of social mobility has fallen over time in South Africa (World Bank, 2018). Race, however, still plays a significant role in explaining social mobility as black Africans are overrepresented in low-income groups and people of Asian/Indian descent (3%) and white South Africans (10%) are over-represented in high-income groups (World Bank, 2018).

3.3.2. Subjective Social Mobility

Subjective social mobility studies explore peoples' beliefs regarding social mobility opportunities that are available in society and their perceptions of economic stratification (Browman et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2020). Subjective social mobility studies also focus on how individuals' perceptions of their social class membership shape and influence their lived experience of social class (Lentz, 2016). Studies on subjective social mobility indicate that most people underestimate the level of economic inequality and overestimate the rate of upward mobility in their countries (Browman et al., 2019; Phillips et al., 2020; Piff et al., 2018). These inaccurate perceptions contribute to economic inequality being legitimized as merit is used to justify why people occupy different positions on the social class hierarchy (Browman et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2020; Piff et al., 2018). Southall (2004) mentions that the emergence of a small number of highly visible black African billionaires in post-apartheid

South Africa has led to South Africans overestimating the upward mobility rate of black Africans.

Telzak (2012, 2014) studied how black African participants in his study categorised economic stratification in South Africa. Urban participants who were exposed to individuals from different social classes perceived that South Africa had an economic structure with a small elite group at the top, a few people in the middle and a large majority at the bottom (Telzak, 2014). Rural participants who were not exposed to urban life perceived that a majority of South Africans were in the middle of the income distribution (Telzak, 2014). Telzak (2012, 2014) further found that urban participants perceived that white South Africans dominated the top end of the income distribution whilst black Africans were at the bottom end. Rural participants perceived that urban dwellers dominated the top end of the income distribution whilst people who lived in rural areas were at the bottom end (Telzak, 2014). Hauser and Norton (2017) state that most people's perceptions of economic inequality are inaccurate because they are construed based on individuals' immediate surroundings.

Subjective social mobility studies also explored the mobility beliefs of black African participants (Seekings, 2017; Telzak; 2014, Wale, 2013). Piff et al. (2018) indicate that people at the top end of the social hierarchy usually perceive that their characteristics facilitated their social mobility whilst those at the bottom of the hierarchy perceive that structural barriers hindered their social mobility. Similarly, black African participants who had experienced upward social mobility perceived that their hard work facilitated their mobility (Seekings; 2017; Telzak, 2012). Participants who had not experienced upward mobility highlighted the role of structural barriers in hindering their social mobility (Seekings; 2017; Telzak, 2012). Wale (2013) found that black African participants in her

study held the view that the affluent needed to work hard to experience upward mobility whilst poor people depended on structural factors such as the availability of employment to experience upward mobility.

Generational differences between black Africans also influenced their social mobility beliefs. Black Africans who grew up during the apartheid era were raised in a socio-political environment where social structures hindered the mobility of black Africans (Motloung, 2019). These black Africans also lived through a period where opportunities increased for black Africans in post-apartheid South Africa (Moses et al., 2017). According to Bray et al. (2010), working-class black African parents in their study perceived that their children had better social mobility opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa when compared to previous generations. Wendy Luhabe, a prominent businesswoman, also caused controversy in 2018 when she claimed that younger black Africans were not taking advantage of increased opportunities in post-apartheid South Africa (Maphanga, 2018). Luhabe claimed that younger black Africans were not as industrious as previous generations and they had a culture of entitlement and dependency (Maphanga, 2018).

Subjective social mobility studies have also explained how black Africans construe their social class. Burger et al. (2015a) found that research participants in their study from different race groups, irrespective of their income levels, placed themselves in the middle of the income distribution. Phadi and Manda (2013) also studied how terms available in African languages (Sesotho and Zulu) shaped how Sowetans understood social class. Phadi and Manda (2013) found that most participants indicated that they were in the middle. Participants used the word middle to reflect a position where an individual was neither poor nor rich but this word was not equivalent to middle-class. The middle position was also

construed differently with upper-middle-class individuals comparing themselves with affluent individuals whilst working-class individuals compared themselves with less well-off individuals in their communities (Phadi & Ceruti, 2013).

Historical and discursive complexities also influenced how black Africans construed their social class (de Coninck, 2018; Iqani, 2015). Black Africans who objectively met the criteria of being middle-class distanced themselves from this label (Burger et al., 2015a; Khunou, 2015; Modisha, 2008, Ngoma, 2016a). Middle-class black Africans who were relatively affluent during the apartheid era were suspected of colluding with the apartheid regime and they had to emphasise commonalities with members of their communities (Iqani, 2015). These black Africans emphasised shared racial discrimination and underplayed social class differences (Khunou, 2015; Modisha, 2008). Middle-class black African research participants who continued to underplay social class in post-apartheid studies indicated that race was an immutable identity whilst social class was unstable (Khunou, 2015; Ngoma, 2016a). These participants argued that their class status was tenuous because they did not have generational wealth and their race superseded class as they still experienced racial discrimination in the workplace (Khunou, 2015; Modisha, 2008; Ngoma, 2016a).

Black African research participants were also reluctant to self-identify as middle-class because they did not want to be labelled as black diamonds and presented as conspicuous consumers (Chevalier, 2015; de Coninck, 2018; Donaldson et al., 2013; Khunou, 2015; Kitis et al., 2018; Ngoma, 2016a). These research participants argued that the black diamond narrative presented the ordinary lifestyle of black Africans as exotic and this endorsed the objectification of middle-class black Africans (Chevalier, 2015; de Coninck, 2018; Donaldson et al., 2013; Khunou, 2015; Kitis et al. , 2018; Ngoma, 2016a). Participants who

had a trade union background further indicated that they could not be middle-class because they were proudly black African and they were also in touch with the plight of the poor (Modisha, 2008). According to de Coninck (2018), there has been a discursive shift in recent years with younger black Africans starting to embrace their middle-class identity. These younger black Africans reframed their membership in the black African middle-class by highlighting the role middle-class black Africans played in founding political liberation movements and in advancing the cause of a non-racial South Africa (de Coninck, 2018). de Coninck (2018) further indicates that the black African middle-class label is constantly being renegotiated in South African society around indictments of racial disloyalty and economic immorality.

Subjective social mobility studies further explained perceptions of black Africans regarding pathways that they perceived facilitated upward mobility (Seekings, 2017; Telzak; 2014, Wale, 2013). A majority of these participants viewed education as playing a major role in facilitating upward mobility in South Africa (Seekings, 2017, Telzak, 2014). Rural participants, who were more reliant on government employment for upward mobility, also stressed the role of political connections in facilitating upward mobility (Telzak, 2014). Participants in a study conducted by Wale (2013) further mentioned that self-presentation was an important element in signalling social class membership. These participants believed that social class membership could be signalled through acts such as wearing branded clothing, dressing neatly and owning the right gadgets (Phadi & Ceruti, 2013; Wale, 2013). These participants stated that performing being middle-class through consumption was equal to objectively meeting the criteria of being middle-class (Phadi & Ceruti, 2013; Wale, 2013).

Social mobility beliefs indicate how participants perceive the interrelationship between their agency and structural barriers in facilitating or hindering their social mobility (Markus & Stephens, 2017; Phillips et al., 2020a). This study focused on both objective and subjective social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. Only black Africans who objectively occupied middle-class occupations were interviewed. These black Africans were also given an opportunity to explain subjective social mobility strategies that they used to get to where they are (Phillips et al., 2020a).

3. 4. EDUCATION AS AN AVENUE OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Studies that have been conducted in South Africa on the role of education in facilitating or hindering social mobility were mostly conducted by economists using panel surveys or assessment results from local and international tests (de Clercq, 2020). Economists argue that the labour market is the main contributor to income inequality in South Africa whilst the education system is the main contributor to inequality in the labour market (Van der Berg et al., 2011). Historically, the education system was designed to provide inferior labour market outcomes to black African students by preparing them for low-skilled jobs (Leibbrandt et al., 2010; McKeever, 2017). With the advent of democracy, the education system was transformed by the South African government. Race-based educational departments were discontinued, the curriculum was standardised across all schools and government spending was targeted at poor students (Spaull, 2013; Van der Berg & Burger, 2003; Van der Berg et al., 2011). The educational attainment of black Africans has increased, there is close to universal access to primary and high school education in the country, infrastructure in some black African schools has been improved and working conditions of teachers have also improved (de Clercq, 2020; Leibbrandt et al., 2010; Makgetla, 2020).

The legacy of differentiated education, however, has not been completely eradicated (Van der Berg et al., 2011). South Africa has a dual education system with schools that offer radically different labour market prospects (Moses et al., 2017). Eighty per cent (80%) of the schools in South Africa are considered to be low performers (dysfunctional) whilst only twenty per cent (20%) are high performers (functional) (de Clercq, 2020). According to Spaull (2019), the quality of education provided in a school is largely dependent on whether the school charges fees or not. Schools in South Africa are categorized according to the socio-economic characteristics of the areas where they are located (Branson & Leibbrandt, 2013). Quintile 1, 2, and 3 schools are located in poor areas and they are not allowed to charge fees whilst Quintile 4 and 5 schools charge fees. Ninety-eight per cent (98%) of no-fee schools serve poor students who are mostly black African or coloured (Spaull, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted differences between fee-paying and non-fee- paying schools and the socio-economic status of students who attend these schools (Fataar & Badroodien, 2020; Jansen, 2020; Le Grange, 2020, Motala & Menon, 2020; Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020). More than three thousand (3000) schools in poor areas did not have proper sanitation and water before the COVID-19 outbreak (Black et al., 2020). Education provision during lockdown was also dependent on schoolchildren having mobile devices and internet access (Fataar & Badroodien, 2020; Jansen, 2020; Le Grange, 2020, Motala & Menon, 2020; Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020). Only around twenty-two per cent (22%) of South Africans have computers and about ten per cent (10%) have internet access (Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020). A majority of schoolchildren in no-fee schools missed approximately forty per cent (40%) of scheduled school days because they could not access education remotely (Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020). When these children returned to school, teachers could not manage to cover the full curriculum in the shortened period (Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020). Students

from middle-class schools continued their education online during lockdown with minimal disruptions (Fataar & Badroodien, 2020; Jansen, 2020; Le Grange, 2020, Motala & Menon, 2020; Van der Berg & Spaull, 2020).

Schools that historically catered for white and Indian students offer high-quality education and they are more racially diverse (Van der Berg & Hofmeyr, 2018). The quality of education offered to Indian students has improved over time as in the past it was not equivalent to that offered to white students (Carrim, 2012; Van der Berg & Hofmeyr, 2018). According to Spaull (2019), the functional education system still serves a minority of citizens in the country but the exclusion criterion has shifted from race to class and race. Students who attend poor schools are more likely to perform below par on national and international assessments regardless of the Grade or subject being assessed (Moses et al., 2017; Spaull, 2019). Students in South Africa only undergo an external examination in their final year of high school (matric) (Leibbrandt et al., 2010; Spaull, 2013). The top two hundred (200) high schools, with one hundred and eighty-five (185) of these schools being historically white (3% of high schools), achieve more A aggregate matric passes in mathematics and physical science than six thousand four hundred and seventy-six (6476) high schools combined (97% of high schools) (Spaull, 2019).

Students of Indian descent and white students perform better in matric than black African students. In 2019, Indian and white students had approximately eighty per cent (80%) matric success rate whilst black African students had approximately fifty per cent (50%) matric success rate in the same year (BusinessTech, 2020). In 2008, five per cent (5%) of black African students achieved an average of 60% and above in matric whilst eighty per cent (80%) of white students achieved the same feat (Moses et al., 2017). Approximately

seventeen per cent (17%) of students who write matric achieve university entrance passes (de Clercq, 2020). Only three (3%) to four (4%) per cent of these students are from quintile 1-3 schools (Moses et al., 2017).

Branson and Leibbrandt (2013) point out that matric results are not a true indication of the performance of the education system as approximately fifty per cent (50%) of the students who started school in different cohorts would have dropped out. Very few students drop out in primary school and most start dropping out between Grade eight (8) and matric (Branson & Leibbrandt, 2013; Moses et al., 2017; Van der Berg & Louw, 2006). There are high rates of grade repetition in low-income schools and students who have repeated grades are more likely to drop out (Branson & Leibbrandt, 2013; Moses et al., 2017; Van der Berg et al., 2019). According to Branson and Leibbrandt (2013), thirty per cent (30%) of poor students who attended Grade eleven (11) in 2010 had repeated at least one grade whilst only eight per cent (8%) of the richest students in the same grade had repeated a class. Branson and Leibbrandt (2013) further mention there is pressure on schools to meet national pass rate targets and provincial departments encourage teachers to hold back students who are likely to fail matric. Held-back overage students were also most likely to drop out of school as there is a regulation that sets age limits for different grades (Branson & Leibbrandt , 2013; Van der Berg et al., 2019). High dropout rates and poor matric results hinder a majority of students from accessing tertiary education (Moses et al., 2017).

High fees also contribute to the number of students who can access tertiary education (Makgetla, 2018). Approximately one-third of matriculants who obtain university entrance passes never go to university (Van der Berg & Hofmeyr, 2018). Calitz and Fourie (2016) calculated the cost of a BA degree at the University of Stellenbosch between 1911 and 2015.

The cost of this degree had increased in real terms by thirty per cent (30%) between 2006 and 2015 as a result of declining government expenditure on tertiary education, increased student enrolments and pressure to maintain quality standards (Calitz & Fourie, 2016). In 2015, fifty-nine per cent (59%) of university students were from the richest quintile households even though these students made up only sixteen per cent (16%) of students in the general education system (Makgetla, 2018).

3. 5. ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF BLACK AFRICANS

According to Townsend and Troung (2017), founders of companies set up their business operating models according to the models of competence that they ascribe to and they further set capital requirements based on their cultural ideal of a good employee. Business organizations and their owners play a major role in generating and maintaining income inequality in society as they distribute labour market income (Bapuji, 2015) . South Africa has a lower number of entrepreneurs when compared to other developing countries (Houghteling, 2007; Iheduru, 2003; Makgetla, 2020; Swartz, 2019). In 2017, only six per cent (6%) of South Africans were entrepreneurs whilst in most developing countries entrepreneurs made up ten per cent (10%) of the population (Makgetla, 2020). Entrepreneurial activity in the country is also racially structured (Herrington et al. 2010; Makgetla, 2020; Southall, 2004). White South Africans make up a large proportion of those who own big companies whilst most black Africans are in survivalist businesses (Herrington et al. 2010; Makgetla, 2020; Southall, 2004).

Black Africans are less likely to engage in entrepreneurship (4.3%) when compared to white South Africans (13.2%) and South Africans of Indian descent (16.1%) (Preisendörfer et al.,

2012). The reasons offered for the low entrepreneurial activity of this group include that black Africans have a culture of dependency and they see large businesses and the government as responsible for creating employment (Bushe, 2019; Fatoki & Odeyemi, 2010; Herrington et al. 2010;). Black Africans are also argued to prefer the security of having professional jobs rather than risking the financial instability that comes with being entrepreneurs (Bushe, 2019; Fatoki & Odeyemi, 2010; Herrington et al. 2010). Furthermore, black Africans are argued to lack the economic, cultural and social capital required to start and manage large businesses as historical legislative barriers hindered the development of a black African entrepreneurial class (Bushe, 2019; Co, 2003; Makgetla, 2020).

In the post-apartheid era, white industrialists initiated Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) to deracialise the economy by selling shares on credit to prominent black African politicians and businesspeople (Iheduru, 2003; Mbeki, 2007). Mbeki (2007) argues that white capitalists initiated BEE because they wanted to preserve their powerful position by influencing how economic transformation should take place in post-apartheid South Africa. BEE facilitated the growth of a few highly visible black African industrialists (Houghteling, 2007; Patel & Graham, 2012; Southall, 2004). BEE, however, was widely criticised for co-opting a minority of politically-connected black Africans into the mainstream economy whilst excluding the majority (Nzimande, 2007).

The Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 53 of 2003 (B-BBEE) was passed to make empowerment deals broad-based by including disadvantaged members of society (Patel & Graham, 2012). Big companies started allocating shares to their employees to meet the requirement of being broad-based. These shares were used as a retention scheme and they were allocated to employees in managerial and scarce middle-class occupations (Patel &

Graham, 2012). Shares were also offered to the public and only those who were in a favourable financial position could afford to buy these shares (Patel & Graham, 2012). Furthermore, a majority of women-led companies that benefitted from the broad-based requirement were owned by women who had family relationships with leading politicians or businessmen (Iheduru, 2003). The benefits of B-BBEE were insignificant for small and medium-sized businesses, employees in lower-level positions and South Africans who had limited economic capital (Patel & Graham, 2012).

3.6. SOUTH AFRICAN WORKPLACES

South African workplaces were historically structured in a manner that white males occupied dominant positions whilst other groups occupied subordinate positions (Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). The political transformation that took place in 1994 shifted power dynamics in South Africa and altered hierarchies in the workplace (Booysen 2007a, Booysen 2007b). Bourdieu (1986) states that when changes are taking place in a field some members of society lose their positions, others gain new positions and some remain in the same place. Van Zyl-Hermann (2014) argues that working-class white South Africans lost their privileged position in post-apartheid South Africa and within the white population they were the group most adversely affected by the political transformation. White South Africans are under-represented in unskilled (1%) and semi-skilled (5%) occupational categories (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020).

South Africans of Indian descent are making the greatest strides in post-apartheid South Africa as they are the most preferred designated group (Biyela, 200; Commission for Employment Equity, 2020; Weeto, 2019). South Africans of Indian descent make up

approximately three per cent (3%) of the Economically Active Population and they occupy ten per cent (10%) of top management positions, eleven per cent (11%) of senior management positions and nine per cent (9%) of professional occupational groups (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Black Africans are the group making the slowest progression in post-apartheid South Africa (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). This section will discuss factors that are regarded as contributing to the low representation of black Africans in middle-class occupations in white-dominated contexts.

3.6.1. Racialised Competence

Workplaces are made up of organizational structures that assign different levels of power and privilege to role players (Côté , 2011). These hierarchies are based on the belief that people have different levels of competence based on their possession of capital valued in the workplace (Côté, 2011; Moore, 2014). The evaluation system that is used to distinguish players in the workplace is promoted as meritocratic (Hardy, 2014; Schubert, 2014). Power relations are further reproduced and maintained in the workplace through institutionalized employment policies and actions of organizational agents that implement and enforce these policies (Côté, 2011; Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). Gray and Kish-Gephart (2013) argue that organizations perpetuate inequalities by creating different levels of autonomy and accountability. Employees who occupy top and middle-class positions have more autonomy and accountability when compared to those who occupy low-status positions (Côté, 2011; Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). Gatekeepers further bring societal opinions of competence into the workplace and this results in some employees receiving more favourable treatment when compared to those stereotyped as having low competence (Côté, 2011; Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013).

Inequality in South African workplaces is socially and historically created by laws that entrenched racial discrimination in society and the workplace (Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). This inequality was argued to be fair because of the superiority of white South Africans and the inferiority of black Africans (Cobley, 1986; Nattrass & Seekings, 2010). Competence became racialised via explicit laws and through unquestioned social practices and perceptions (Nzimande, 1991). As a result, white South Africans have a higher value of symbolic capital when compared to other race groups in South Africa as they are deemed to be the most competent racial group (Hammond et al., 2007; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). Furthermore, white South Africans also define competence in the South African workplace as they occupy most of the senior roles (Bourdieu, 1986; Hammond et al., 2009).

There is still an implicit bias in South Africa that black Africans do not have the competence to occupy managerial and professional positions (Carey, 2018; Dlamini. 2013; Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Motloung (2019) mentions that when black Africans started occupying senior positions in universities, these black Africans were accused of administrative incompetence and corruption. Reuben and Bobat (2014, p.10) state that when accusations about black African incompetence and corruption emerge, it is difficult to know "what is true, what is constructed and what is imagined". These accusations, however, promote the idea that black Africans are not qualified to perform certain jobs (Reuben & Bobat, 2014). Ndzwayiba (2017) further found that white participants and participants of Indian descent in his study argued that twenty-two (22) years was a short time for black Africans to have amassed the experience needed in top management positions and they still needed to be developed for these positions. Ndzwayiba (2017) mentions that ironically most executives in that research organization had less than twenty-two (22) years of working

experience. However, participants believed that their organization would collapse if black Africans who had the same amount of work experience as white executives occupied top management positions (Ndzwayiba, 2017).

The legal requirement for employers to implement Affirmative Action measures further provided an avenue for South Africans to advance the idea of racialised competence in a socially acceptable manner (Durrheim et al., 2007; Reuben & Bobat, 2014). A discursive association between Affirmative Action and black African incompetence became entrenched in South African society (Reuben & Bobat, 2014). The lack of service delivery by the public service sector, for example, was used as a forum to discuss the failings of Affirmative Action (Bikitsha, 2014; Haffajee, 2014). Critics of Affirmative Action claimed that standards were lowered in the public service sector because Affirmative Action candidates were appointed to positions that required competency levels that were beyond their capabilities (Hermann, 2015; Magopeni, 2014).

Heilman (1996) mentions that studies on Affirmative Action indicate that beneficiaries are stigmatized as being incompetent. Affirmative Action beneficiaries are seen as being given preferential treatment to occupy positions that they do not deserve (Heilman, 1996). In South Africa, critics of Affirmative Action usually couch racial stereotypes about skill and competence as concerns about the efficacy of Affirmative Action as a mechanism to redress historical imbalances or as concerns regarding the implementation of Affirmative Action measures (Durrheim et al., 2007; Magopeni, 2014; Reuben & Bobat, 2014). Mechanisms such as improving the education system or enhancing the potential of Affirmative Action beneficiaries through training and mentorship are promoted as being more effective in redressing historical imbalances than Affirmative Action (Magopeni, 2014). Wilson (2005)

indicates that the view that inequality can be redressed through opportunity-enhancing mechanisms such as education, training and mentorship assumes that all Affirmative Action beneficiaries are recipients of inferior education and that they have no work experience for all roles.

The belief in racialised competence maintains inequality in South African workplaces as black Africans are overrepresented in low-level positions and underrepresented in strategic positions (Biyela, 2009; Commission for Employment Equity, 2019; Reuben & Bobat, 2014). Black Africans are also deemed to be more suitable to occupy positions that are easy and practical or support roles (Biyela, 2009; Booysen, 2007a; Carey, 2018; Magojo, 1996; Modisha, 2008; Reuben & Bobat, 2014; Weeto, 2019). Black Africans are further subjected to racialised performance expectations and they are supervised more closely than professionals and managers from other race groups (Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ngoma, 2016a). Furthermore, some black Africans who were appointed to management positions were not given the concomitant responsibilities and authority assigned to these positions (Booysen, 2007a; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, 2019).

3.6.2. Culture Fit

Organizational culture was found to be one of the most prominent factors that hindered the upward career mobility of black Africans (Booysen, 2007a, Ndzwayiba, 2017; Nkomo, 2011). Ruggunan et al. (2022) argue that most South African organizations were created with white employees in mind. As a result, most of these organizations use whiteness as an invisible standard to evaluate the competence of those who are not white (Carey, 2018). Black Africans who are knowledgeable of western cultures have a higher probability of being

evaluated as competent when compared with black Africans who do not possess this competence (Carey, 2018; Magojo, 1996; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Dlamini (2013) further states that class membership gives black Africans unequal opportunities to familiarize themselves with western standards, norms and values. Black Africans who have had international exposure, attended schools in the functional education system or have attained their qualifications from historically white or overseas universities were more likely to be evaluated by gatekeepers as a culture fit (Dlamini, 2013; Hammond et al., 2009; Ndzwayiba, 2017).

Black Africans are regarded as being unsuitable to occupy middle-class occupations because they bring interdependent behaviours into western contexts that require independent behaviours (Dlamini, 2013; Myres, 2013). Western and African black cultures, for example, use different techniques to signal respect (Mtshelwane et al., 2016; Myres, 2013). Black African cultures promote diplomacy, indirect confrontation, tact and respect (Myres, 2013). However, when evaluated from western culture, black Africans who behave in this manner are seen as weak, subservient and self-doubting (Myers, 2013). Carrim (2019) also found that managers of Indian descent who showed respect in the workplace and deployed an inclusive management style were regarded as weak and submissive by white people in their work environment.

Mtshelwane et al. (2016) further found that black Africans in their study stated that they would use conscientiousness and integrity to impress their supervisors. Dlamini (2013) argues that conscientiousness is an ineffective impression management strategy in white-dominated contexts especially when it is paired with humility as African cultures discourage self-promotion. Thus, black Africans who conform to these norms keep silent about their

achievements and believe that their hard work will speak for them (Dlamini, 2013). These black Africans believe that the corporate world is based on meritocracy and that those who work hard get rewarded (Dlamini, 2013, Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017). A black African female in a study conducted by Ndzwayiba (2017, p.154) is quoted stating "you can be a good girl (you know), do everything right but if you don't know organizational politics at the end of the day you won't go anywhere." Another black African female interviewed by Dlamini (2013, p.96) argued: "When you come from the upper class, you are pretty; you have a personality that draws people towards you; those things matter MUCH MUCH MORE than competence. Competence eventually gets you through, but it won't get you to the top".

Townsend and Troung (2017) state that individuals who want to experience upward career mobility need to build relationships with gatekeepers who can facilitate their upward mobility. These individuals need to engage in ingratiation behaviour when interacting with superiors so that they can be recommended for promotions. Townsend and Troung (2017) further indicate that people who ascribe to interdependent normative culture-specific selves are usually uncomfortable building relationships that are based on treating others as resources as they value authentic relationships (Townsend & Truong, 2017). Hence, these individuals tend to have fewer networks that can assist them with facilitating their career mobility (Townsend & Truong, 2017). Piff et al. (2018) further indicate that individuals who ascribe to interdependent normative culture-specific selves avoid seeking positions of power because they believe that they have to engage in political games that involve manipulation, exploitation and deception. Myres (2013) found that two-thirds of black African executives in his study stated that they needed coaching on how to manage corporate politics. One of the participants is quoted as saying "Typically the culture clash is very high. Guys are not

prepared for the corporate culture; when they find out about the level of politics, they don't want to participate" (Myres, 2013, p.99).

Furthermore, black Africans who have only lived and worked in South Africa are stereotyped as struggling to adapt to white-dominated contexts because they find it difficult to relate to people from different cultures (Dlamini, 2013; Mthembu, 2020; Myres, 2013). These black Africans are posited to experience a culture shock when entering white-dominated contexts whilst black Africans who have lived or studied overseas are used to healthy interracial interactions (Dlamini, 2013; Mthembu, 2020; Myres, 2013). Black Africans who grew up in other countries were seen to be even more advantaged as they learnt to interact with different cultures early in life (Mthembu, 2020). Dlamini (2013) further argues that some black Africans who have no global exposure struggle to interact with members of other race groups on an equal basis. Furthermore, Dlamini (2013) argues that some black Africans who have not lived or studied overseas have been mentally paralyzed by their oppressive experiences during the apartheid era.

Moreover, Myres (2013) argues that studying or working overseas offsets disadvantageous black African cultural influences or prescripts of Ubuntu. As a result, black Africans with overseas experience are direct, effective and able to drive performance at a standard required by western companies (Myres, 2013). Myres (2013) further recommends that companies should send their black African employees overseas so they could overcome the detrimental effects of their black African culture. Marx (2019) also found that black African Chartered Accountants in her study started being accepted in their firms after they had started travelling overseas and could share experiences of their excursions. Their professional designation as Chartered Accountants was not enough to create camaraderie with their peers (Marx, 2019).

Deer (2014) argues that most people do not recognize the social arbitrariness of practices in a field because most people do not question the underlying assumptions of these practices. The practices become self-reinforcing as people are not aware of their role in perpetuating inequality in a field (Deer, 2014). South Africa has a diverse workforce with people who are members of four different race groups and who speak at least one of the eleven (11) official languages (Brink, 2014). Western cultures are perceived to be the only legitimate cultures and members of other cultural groups are expected to assimilate into these cultures (Carey, 2018; Dlamini, 2013; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020; Myres, 2013). Ndzwayiba (2017) points out that there is hypocrisy in the idea that the acceptance of black Africans in western workplaces should be premised on black Africans allowing themselves to be westernised.

A participant in a study conducted by Dlamini (2013) also noted that white-dominated workplaces are based on the idea that the lived experiences of white people are the only legitimate lived experiences. Black Africans are expected to bring to work only experiences that are understood by white gatekeepers and peers (Dlamini, 2013). Black Africans, however, have lived experiences that span rural and urban settings, African and western cultures and different social classes (Dlamini, 2013). Ndzwayiba (2017) further states that gatekeepers in white-dominated organizations seldom question the underlying assumptions of employment practices that surround the concept of culture fit and how their actions perpetuate unequal power relations. The idea that the exclusionary culture of an organization might be the problem is never considered and the onus is shifted to black Africans to fit in (Ndzwayiba, 2017).

Black Africans are also held to a different standard and they have to invest more resources to signal their competence and fit (Dlamini, 2013; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020). A minority

of black Africans can afford to study, work, travel or live overseas as black Africans make up a majority of those who are poor (World Bank, 2018). The irony of the requirement of global exposure is that it only applies to black Africans and its proponents seem oblivious to this fact. Black Africans with a class advantage are the ones who will be able to keep up with evolving capital requirements in the workplace (Dlamini, 2013). Black Africans from a working-class background who manage to enter middle-class occupations will find that other arbitrary requirements that are not linked to their competence will influence their career progression (Dlamini, 2013; Hammond et al., 2009; Marx, 2019). Hence, members of the dominant group will continue to maintain their position in the field as they can inflate standards to exclude others (Dlamini, 2013; Hammond et al., 2009).

3.6.3. Evolving Capital Requirements

Fields are social spaces that are constantly evolving and the volume and composition of capital required in the field also evolves to match these changes (Maton, 2008). Practices in the field are also constantly evolving as dominant players employ different tactics to maintain their position (Maton, 2008; Thomson, 2014). Members of dominant groups distinguish themselves from others by controlling what is esteemed in the field (Crossley, 2014). Hardy (2014) states that in evolving fields members of the dominant group use their accumulated capital to set new capital requirements that advantage them and disadvantage members of dominated groups. Hence, changes in a field do not significantly alter power relations as players internalize and justify new capital requirements (Deer, 2014). Hammond et al. (2009) argue that the basis of exclusion in South African workplaces has shifted from race to cultural factors that are not linked to technical competence but act as a proxy for race.

3.6.3. 1. Educational Requirements

In the post-apartheid era, the government implemented policies that aimed to make tertiary education accessible and this increased the number of black African graduates (Van Broekhuizen, 2016; Van der Berg &Van Broekhuizen, 2012). Van Broekhuizen (2016) states that the number of black African graduates increased from 3400 in 1986 to 63 000 in 2012. During the apartheid era, black Africans with tertiary education had better opportunities of being employed in middle-class occupations (Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). In the post-apartheid era, black African graduates are more likely to be unemployed when compared with graduates from other race groups (Kraak, 2015; Lehohla, 2018; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2016; Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012).

The fields of study selected by black African students were cited as one of the possible reasons why black Africans were experiencing higher rates of unemployment when compared to other race groups (Magojo, 1996). According to Magojo (1996), a majority of black Africans graduated with degrees in humanities and commerce whilst a majority of white students were graduating with degrees in science and technology. Studies indicate that this argument is not supported by empirical evidence (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2016; Van der Berg & Van Broekhuizen, 2012). Racial differences in graduate unemployment are also observed in groups where students completed the same degree (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2016; Van der Berg &Van Broekhuizen, 2012).

The second reason offered for racial differences in graduate unemployment was the quality of qualifications offered by different institutions (Magojo, 1996; Pauw et al., 2006; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van der Berg &Van Broekhuizen, 2012). The higher education sector

includes research institutions (previously white universities), traditional and comprehensive universities (some are previously white and black universities merged) and universities of technology (former technikons) (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). Most black African students attend historically black universities or merged universities (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). These universities are perceived to be awarding a lower quality of qualifications when compared to research institutions (Magojo, 1996; Pauw et al., 2006; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van der Berg &Van Broekhuizen, 2012). Studies found that there were different labour market outcomes for graduates who attended research institutions and those who attended historically black universities or merged universities (Pauw et al., 2006; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2016). Graduates from research institutions had a higher probability of being employed when compared to graduates from other institutions of learning (Pauw et al., 2006; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2016).

Van Broekhuizen (2016), however, argues that the type of institutions attended by members of different racial groups did not fully explain racial differences in graduate employment. There were still racial differences in the probability of employment between graduates who attended the same institution (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015; Van Broekhuizen, 2016). The type of institution attended affected the employment of black African and Coloured graduates whilst white and graduates of Indian descent found employment regardless of the type of institution that they had attended (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). Black Africans from research institutions and traditional institutions had the same unemployment rate as white students from universities of technology (Van Broekhuizen, 2016). Thus, black African graduates from respected universities have the same unemployment rate as white students from less esteemed institutions (Van Broekhuizen, 2016).

Rogan and Reynolds (2015) also found that the type of high school attended influenced labour market outcomes for graduates in the same institutions. Black African females from low-quintile schools were less likely to be employed when compared to their peers (Rogan & Reynolds, 2015). Hammond et al. (2009) argue that there is an intractable link between class and race in South Africa. Rogan and Reynolds (2015) further found that over half of Fort Hare graduates (historically black African university) had attended low-cost public schools whilst close to half of Rhodes University(historically white African university) graduates had attended Model C schools with thirty per cent (30%) of these students coming from private schools.

Job search methods of graduates were also offered as another reason why graduates from different race groups had dissimilar labour market outcomes (Kraak, 2015; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015). Studies indicate that affluent graduates relied on their social capital to access employment opportunities whilst working-class students relied on formal job advertisements to access job opportunities (Kraak, 2015; Rogan & Reynolds, 2015). Employment practices of organizations also played a role in the employment of graduates (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Pauw et al., 2006). Graduate recruitment drives mainly took place in historically white universities with historically black universities excluded (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Pauw et al., 2006). The rationale for excluding historically black universities was the quality of education provided by these institutions (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Pauw et al., 2006).

Oluwajodu et al. (2015) acknowledged that the practice of not including historically black universities in graduate recruitment drives disadvantaged students from these institutions. To minimize this disadvantage, their recommendation was for quality students from historically

black universities to complete their postgraduate studies in historically white universities (Oluwajodu et al., 2015). This was suggested because employers could not be expected to conduct recruitment drives in historically black universities as it was not cost-effective for them (Oluwajodu et al., 2015). A participant in a study conducted by Myres (2013) noted that black Africans who had attended historically black universities, even when they had work experience, were not preferred candidates in white-dominated organizations.

The last reason offered for racial differences in the employment of graduates was that historically black universities did not equip graduates with the skills required by the market (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Pauw et al., 2006). Pauw et al. (2006) argue that graduates from historically white universities are better equipped by their universities for the workplace. These students have more opportunities to gain work experience and soft skills through being employed in administrative posts and by participating in different student bodies (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Pauw et al., 2006). Pauw et al. (2006) further indicate that soft skills have to be learnt at home and the role of institutions of learning should be to enhance the skills already learnt. Oluwajodu et al. (2015) suggest that the problem of not having the right skills could be avoided by students from historically black universities enquiring from employers about what skills are needed to be successful in the workplace.

The issue of skills deficit was also one of the reasons offered by companies regarding why they were unable to hire or develop black Africans to occupy senior positions in their organizations (Biyela, 2007; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Detractors argue that the argument of skill shortage is a ruse (Biyela, 2007; Ndzwayiba, 2017). There are more black African graduates in the market than in previous years and those who did not have the required skills could be trained as they had demonstrated that they were trainable (Biyela, 2007; Magojo, 1996;

Ndzwayiba, 2017). Whilst detractors argued that it was possible to develop skills required in most positions, companies counter-argued that culture fit was also a skill that could not be easily developed (Oluwajodu et al., 2015; Ndzwayiba, 2017).

Oluwajodu et al. (2015) mention that the criterion that is currently used by companies is equitable as only skills and knowledge are considered when recruiting candidates. In contrast, Hammond et al. (2009) argue that members of a society do not have equal access to opportunities to develop skills and knowledge valued in the workplace. Hence, members of the dominant group set credentials that will exclude others and enable them to entrench their dominant position (Hammond et al. 2009; Maton, 2008; Thomson, 2014). Lehohla (2018) speculates that racial differences in graduate unemployment either reflect real quality differences in educational institutions or labour market discrimination.

3.6.3.2. Language Competence

Studies also indicate that language was one of the capital requirements that facilitated or hindered the upward career mobility of black Africans (Dlamini, 2013; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Black Africans are expected to speak English in an accent that is associated with the Model C or private schooling system (Dlamini, 2013; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Black Africans who speak English with an accent that is closer to how the dominant group speaks are regarded as more intelligent than black Africans who speak with African accents (Dlamini, 2013; Hammond et al. 2009; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017). These black Africans are regarded as having a higher verbal acuity in comparison to their peers who went to township schools (Myres, 2013). Ndzwayiba (2017) states that job advertisements in South Africa disguise the

requirement of speaking English with an accent by stating that candidates must be eloquent English speakers. Studies further indicate that the views of black Africans who speak English with an accent are taken more seriously and these black Africans are regarded as requiring fewer resources to develop them (Dlamini, 2013; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017).

Hammond et al. (2009) further found that some black Africans in their study were denied promotional opportunities based on how they spoke English. Whereas an English accent is used to measure the competence and intelligence of black Africans (Dlamini, 2013; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017), Afrikaans is used as a tool to exclude black Africans in the workplace (Biyela, 2007; Carey, 2018; Hammond et al., 2009; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Nkomo, 2011). Black Africans were excluded from formal meetings or informal learning opportunities through the language being switched from English to Afrikaans (Biyela, 2007; Carey, 2018; Magojo, 1996; Mthembu, 2020; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Afrikaans was also used in meetings to undermine black Africans in leadership positions who had their power usurped because they could not understand discussions taking place in meetings (Carey, 2018).

An accent that is closer to how the dominant group speaks has also been found to facilitate social mobility in countries such as Mexico (Ruiz-Castro & Holvino, 2016), the United Kingdom (Meghji, 2017) and the United States (Carter, 2003; Meghji, 2017; Neckerman et al., 1999). The ability to speak English is used as a tool to differentiate members of subordinate groups by class (Meghji, 2017; Ruiz-Castro & Holvino, 2016). The requirement of accented English is not linked to job performance but reflects power dynamics in an organization (Hammond et al., 2009; Magojo, 1996; Ndzwayiba, 2017). A participant in a study conducted by Hammond et al. (2009) noted that his superiors scrutinized his

pronunciation of English words whilst they failed to pronounce his name correctly every time they spoke to him. In South Africa, exclusion perpetrated using English as a criterion is insidious whilst those who use Afrikaans to exclude express their aggression overtly (Biyela, 2007; Carey, 2018; Hammond et al., 2009; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Irrespective of the approach, the dominance of one group is entrenched whilst those who do not have the language competence required are excluded (Hammond et al. 2009; Maton, 2008; Thomson, 2014).

3.6.3.3. Retention

The legislative requirement to make workplaces more representative opened up employment opportunities for educated black Africans in middle-class occupations (Biyela, 2007; Moses et al., 2017). In the early years of post-apartheid South Africa, there was a shortage of educated black Africans to fill available vacancies and companies competed to employ these black Africans (Biyela, 2007; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). Companies headhunted qualified black Africans and offered them lucrative remuneration packages to join their organizations (Biyela, 2009). Ndzwayiba et al. (2018) indicate that a dominant narrative emerged that black African professionals were job-hopping to maximise their position of being scarce resources in the labour market. The UCT Unilever Institute for Marketing Research conducted interviews in 2006 with sixty (60) black African professionals and found that sixty-five per cent (65%) of their participants had changed jobs in the preceding three years (Biyela, 2007; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Siyotula-Manyoha, 2012). This study was cited in public discourse as proof that black Africans were job-hoppers (Biyela, 2007; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Siyotula-Manyoha, 2012).

Black Africans were characterized by South African corporates as risky hires (Biyela, 2007; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Siyotula-Manyoha, 2012). These organizations argued that they needed an average tenure of five years from new hires to recoup recruitment and training costs (Biyela, 2007). Employers also indicated that they could not take a long-term view and invest resources in developing black African professionals whilst the same black Africans had no intention of staying long-term in their organizations (Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). This argument was legitimised when Tito Mboweni, the former governor of the Reserve Bank, publicly echoed the same sentiment (Biyela, 2007; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Siyotula-Manyoha, 2012). Ndzwayiba et al. (2018) state that as the narrative of job-hopping black Africans gained momentum, the discourse became derogatory and insulting to black African professionals.

The narrative of job-hopping black Africans mirrored the black diamond narrative that represented black Africans as childish, immature and driven by emotional impulses with no regard for the resulting consequences (Kitis et al. ., 2018). This discourse created a perception that black Africans changed jobs for minuscule amounts of money; they had no regard for gaining work experience as they moved on too quickly and they dealt with conflict by looking for new jobs (Magojo, 1996; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). Black Africans were also presented as greedy because they used their position in the market to exploit the financial benefits of companies; untrustworthy as they left jobs before their performance could be scrutinized and lazy because they used the colour of their skin to get jobs instead of working hard (Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). Ndzwayiba et al. (2018) indicate that studies that have explored the retention of black African professionals reach the same conclusion that the main driver of turnover amongst black African professionals is organizational cultures that are not inclusive.

Hardy (2014) indicates that when a field transforms, those who were the first entrants in the field have more symbolic capital than latecomers. Their membership in the field is taken for granted as their dominant position is historically entrenched (Hardy, 2014). Ndzwayiba et al. (2018) argue that the narrative of job-hopping black Africans became generalized to all black Africans with little empirical evidence provided on how their turnover behaviour differed from that of professionals from other race groups. The low symbolic value of black African professionals was emphasized by this narrative whilst the symbolic value of professionals from other race groups was elevated (Hardy, 2014; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). This unquestioned narrative was then used to justify organizational practices that limited the career mobility of black Africans using the business language of recruitment and training costs, investment and retention risk (Hardy, 2014; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018). Power relations in organizations were further entrenched as black Africans were not hired or developed for strategic positions because of their propensity to job hop and the blame for organizations not transforming was shifted to the behaviour of black Africans (Hardy, 2014; Ndzwayiba et al., 2018).

3.6.4. Imperceptible barriers that hinder workplace transformation

According to Maton (2008), dominant groups or individuals in a field have the power to determine what happens in that field and they institute practices that preserve their power. Employers in South Africa are responsible for setting self-imposed Affirmative Action targets that will assist their organizations to achieve equitable and representative workforces (Commission for Employment Equity, 2017; Ruggunan et al., 2022). In the public service sector, the government implemented rigorous targets that resulted in the sector being racially transformed (Bonnin & Ruggunan, 2013). White males, who are the dominant group in the

private sector, are expected to set and drive Affirmative targets in this environment (Biyela, 2007; Booysen, 2007a; Magopeni, 2014; Nkomo, 2011; Myres, 2013; Weeto, 2019). Hence, the achievement of Affirmative Action targets in the private sector is dependent on the group that is least likely to benefit from workplace transformation (Booysen, 2007a; Magopeni, 2014). To accelerate the current slow pace of workplace transformation, the Employment Equity Act was amended in 2020 to include sectorial targets (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). A proposal has also been tabled for penalties of non-compliance to be strengthened to deter employers from not complying with the act (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020).

Studies conducted on the barriers to implementing Employment Equity legislation indicate that South African corporates have best -practice Employment Equity strategies and policies (Booysen, 2007a; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, 2019). However, these strategies and policies are not linked to implementation plans or business cases (Biyela, 2007; Booysen, 2007a; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, 2019). Furthermore, most organizational leaders were not able to offer business rationales for why their organizations were implementing Affirmative Action measures and they also did not communicate to employees the importance of implementing Affirmative Action measures (Booysen, 2007a; Myres, 2013; Weeto, 2019). Moreover, organizational leaders professed their commitment to having representative workforces but they continued to make executive decisions that entrenched existing power structures (Biyela, 2007; Booysen, 2007a; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, 2019).

The achievement of Affirmative Action targets is partially dependent on institutionalized employment policies and the actions of organizational agents that implement and enforce

these policies (Côté, 2011; Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). Nkomo (2011) argues that some organizations sabotaged the implementation of Affirmative Action measures by muddling lines of responsibility. Hence, no employees could be held responsible when Affirmative Action targets were not achieved or when transformation policies were breached (Booysen, 2007a; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, 2019). Human Resource practices in several organizations did not also enable the achievement of Affirmative Action targets (Booysen, 2007a; Myres, 2013; Weeto, 2019). Ineffective recruitment strategies were used to attract black people, interview panels were not diverse, hiring managers preferred to hire white candidates and loopholes were created for managers to circumvent Affirmative Action targets if positions were deemed to be urgent or critical (Booysen, 2007a; Dlamini, 2013; Weeto, 2019). There were also no coordinated efforts to develop talent pools that would meet future Affirmative Action targets (Booysen, 2007a; Weeto, 2019). At times, employment equity candidates were promoted into management roles without a pay increase or additional responsibilities (Biyela, 2007; Weeto, 2019).

Nkomo (2011) further indicates that the quality of training offered in some organizations hampered the implementation of Affirmative Action measures. Black African participants in a study conducted by Weeto (2019) mentioned that training interventions in their organizations were not beneficial as black Africans were trained with no clear career development plan. The Commission for Employment Equity (2020) also found that white employees are the main beneficiaries of training in South Africa. This disproportionate access to training opportunities was perceived by some black Africans in middle-class occupations as entrenching racial hierarchies in organizations (Booysen, 2007a; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, Several research participants also commented that black people had to sometimes undergo developmental training when their peers with similar work experience and qualifications

from the same tertiary institutions were not expected to do so (Biyela, 2007; Moalusi, 2012; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Some participants argued that these training programmes reinforced the idea that black Africans were incompetent (Biyela, 2007; Moalusi, 2012; Ndzwayiba, 2017).

Exposure to on-the-job training was also cited as another way that hierarchies were entrenched in the workplace (Biyela, 2007; Carey, 2018; Hammond et al., 2007; Marx, 2019; Sadler & Erasmus, 2003). Black Africans were given simpler work; they were not given as many learning opportunities as members of other race groups and their seniors were not committed to transferring skills to them (Biyela, 2007; Carey, 2018; Hammond et al., 2007; Marx, 2019; Sadler & Erasmus, 2003). Black African research participants in different studies also perceived that employees were not being given equal opportunities to develop skills required in higher positions (Booysen, 2007; Schoeman, 2010; Weeto, 2019). Black Africans were mainly beneficiaries of training programmes that prepared employees for professional or skilled occupational levels whilst white employees were the main beneficiaries of programmes that prepared individuals for senior management positions (Ndzwayiba, 2017).

3.6.5. Institutionalised Racial Interactions

Bourdieu likened social interactions in a field to a game that specifies the different positions that players must occupy (Calhoun, 2003; Thomson, 2014). Interactions between players develop into a structured pattern as each player takes up a role that is assigned to them (Calhoun, 2003; Thomson, 2014). Dominant individuals, groups or institutions in a field have symbolic power to normalize and impose their interpretation of social life on others (Barrett, 2015). Dominant players impose their way of being as the only legitimate way of thinking,

feeling and acting in the world. (Barrett, 2015; Calhoun, 2003). The autonomy of other players is limited to legitimize the dominance of certain players (Wacquant, 2006). Players who do not conform to their assigned roles disrupt the natural order of how things are in a field (Deer, 2014; Rawls, 1987). Dominant members of the field use symbolic violence which is gentle violence or imperceptible instruments of power, to maintain power relations in a field (Calhoun, 2003; Thomson, 2014).

Black Africans are expected to be affable and to steer away from discussions concerning structural barriers in the workplace or discussions about the history of racial discrimination (Dlamini, 2013; Hammond et al., 2007; Meghji, 2017; Mighti, 2020; Motloung, 2019; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Weeto, 2019). According to Hammond et al. (2007), most South Africans pretend that the country has no history of racial discrimination and those who openly speak about this history in the workplace are silenced. Weeto (2019) argues that discussions regarding racial discrimination are difficult as they touch on economic exclusion and privilege. Black Africans who openly discuss racial discrimination in the workplace are labelled by gatekeepers and colleagues as troublemakers, difficult, radical or angry blacks (Hammond et al., 2007; Mighti, 2020). These black Africans are also labelled as people who are stuck in the past, have a victim mentality or sometimes as people who feel entitled to have opportunities that they did not work for (Hammond et al., 2007). Ndzwayiba (2017) mentions that even transformation specialists he interviewed who were hired to bring change in organizations were labelled as too political when they discussed structural barriers in the workplace.

The history of South Africa in most companies is further narrated in a diluted manner with the aim of not making white employees uncomfortable whilst retaining some pieces of

history that black people can recognize (Hammond et al., 2007; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Uncomfortable historical incidents are minimized, the link between the past and present is muted and companies deflect current institutionalised racism to the past (Hammond et al., 2007; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Nkomo, 2011; Weeto, 2019). Côté (2019) also states that organizational leaders are usually more domineering with members of low-status groups because they are seen as less competent. Studies indicate that black Africans in middle-class occupations still work in hostile environments where they experience racial micro-aggressions (Biyela, 2007; Canham & Williams, 2017; Carey, 2018; Dlamini. 2013; Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017).

According to Soylu and Sheehy-Skeffington (2015), dysfunctional organizational behaviours such as racial microaggressions, workplace bullying and mistreatment of members of low-status groups are usually analysed at an individual and organizational level with the national context being ignored by scholars. Soylu and Sheehy-Skeffington (2015) argue that in societies where there is inequality or inter-group conflict, members of subordinate groups are denied opportunities for social advancement and they experience incivility and bullying in the workplace that is meant to cause them psychological harm. Salin (2003) further argues that workplace bullying is prevalent in organizations where there are perceived low costs and risks for mistreating members of low-status groups. Soylu and Sheehy-Skeffington (2015) studied workplace bullying in Turkey where changes in the political sphere had altered the established hierarchy. Soylu and Sheehy-Skeffington (2015) found that workplace bullying was used as a political tool to create an unpleasant working environment so that members of low-status groups would resign. Bullying was also used to advance the socioeconomic status of members of the dominant group (Soylu & Sheehy-Skeffington, 2015).

Magopeni (2014) found that some white participants in her study perceived Affirmative Action to be a mechanism that is deployed to humiliate white people and reduce their self-worth. These participants engaged in retributive behaviour by making condescending comments and labelling black Africans as helpless, hopeless and inferior (Magopeni, 2014). A participant in a study conducted by Myres (2013) also observed that black Africans were treated with contempt in some organizations because they were seen as Affirmative Action candidates who achieved their roles without putting in the hard work. Furthermore, Ndzwayiba (2017) also found that the culture in one of the organizations where he conducted his research was toxic and research participants perceived this culture to be a "kick the underdog culture". The hierarchical structure in this organization was racialised and those who were at the bottom of the hierarchy (mostly black Africans) bore most of the brunt of this culture.

Thus, hierarchical racial interactions are maintained in white-dominated organizations through black Africans conforming to implicit performance expectations of not discussing racial discrimination (Hammond et al., 2007; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Racial interactions are also maintained through employees from other race groups justifying the racial hierarchical structure of their organizations(Ndzwayiba, 2017). Furthermore, gatekeepers employed symbolic violence and dysfunctional organizational behaviours to bring members of subordinate groups into line (Canham & Williams, 2017; Myres, 2013).

3.7. CONCLUSION

The political transformation that took place in 1994 shifted power dynamics in South Africa (Booysen 2007a, Booysen 2007b). Black Africans who were the richest in social, cultural and

economic capital benefitted from the changes (Hardy, 2014). As it takes a long time for fields to transform the structures in the economy, the educational sector and workplaces have retained the same racial hierarchy in the post-apartheid era as during the apartheid (Commission for Employment Equity, 2021; Nzimande, 2007; Spaull, 2019). A minority of black Africans who meet capital requirements in valued gateway contexts have experienced upward mobility but a majority of black Africans remain entrenched in poverty because they do not have the required capital to meet the demands of these transforming contexts (Hardy, 2014).

CHAPTER FOUR

INSTITUTIONALISED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Workplaces are social spaces with interactions that follow an ordered pattern based on the position of players (Thomson, 2014). There are gatekeepers in different workplaces that have the power to decide who can access and be promoted in that work context (Moore, 2014). According to Maton (2008), participants in a field select strategies that maximise their position in organizational hierarchies. This chapter will review literature that discusses strategies that individuals who belong to groups that are at the bottom of racial or social class hierarchies have used to advance or maintain their position in the workplace.

4.2. PATTERNS OF SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

4.2. 1. Marginal Man

In the 1970s, some international companies operating in South Africa committed that they would provide workplaces that did not practice racial discrimination and they would also implement Affirmative Action measures to advance black Africans (Wella, 1983). A small number of black Africans were appointed to managerial and professional positions (Human & Hofmeyr, 1984). These black Africans occupied a subordinate position in society because of their race but economically they were relatively better off than most black Africans (Human & Hofmeyr, 1984). Van Zyl-Hermann (2014) argues that working-class white South Africans

were in a polar opposite position, their race placed them in a superior position in society but their economic status placed them in a subordinate position. Hence, working-class white South Africans and black Africans in middle-class occupations were the first groups to experience the thorns of political changes that were taking place in the country (Human, 1981; Human & Hofmeyr, 1984; Nzimande, 1991; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2014; Wella, 1983).

When outside workplaces that had implemented Affirmative Action, black Africans in middle-class occupations lived in a context where overt racial discrimination was still being practised (Allen, 1984). In their roles as managers and professionals, they were expected to exercise authority over working-class white South Africans and to interact with white people as equals (Human, 1981; Human & Hofmeyr, 1984). Furthermore, Human and Human (1998) indicate that black Africans in middle-class occupations had to start learning how to navigate subtle racism. Hiring practices; remuneration structures and training programmes were still racially based but companies purported that their HR practices were meritocratic (Nzimande, 1986; Nzimande, 1991). As visible structures of racial discrimination were removed in these organizations, credentials started replacing race as the main criterion of exclusion (Human & Human, 1981).

Black Africans in middle-class occupations were also expected by white management to make decisions that elevated production targets over people whilst militant working-class black Africans expected solidarity because of shared racial discrimination (Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). Black Africans in middle-class occupations were labelled as marginal men because they were not fully accepted as part of management by their peers because of their race and working-class black Africans regarded them as an out-group because they were part of management (Badenhorst, 1981; Erwee, 1998; Human, 1981; Human & Hofmeyr, 1984).

Black Africans in middle-class occupations who put forward the views of working-class black African workers to management were seen as instigators or as not suitable to fulfil managerial or professional roles (Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). These black Africans were perceived by management as having an affiliation orientation instead of a production orientation (Wella, 1983). Nzimande (1991) further states that the price of being seen as a collaborator by militant black African workers was high as black Africans in middle-class occupations lived in the same communities as working-class black African workers. Working-class black African workers sometimes resorted to violence outside the workplace to resolve work-related issues (Nzimande, 1991).

To align themselves with militant black African workers, some black Africans in middle-class occupations rebranded themselves as corporate guerrillas who were fighting the war from within (Nzimande, 1991). Other black African professionals circumvented expectations of solidarity from black African workers and loyalty from white management by distancing themselves from both groups and stating that they were loyal to the ethics of their professions (Nzimande, 1991). There were also black Africans who embarked on acquiring qualifications to meet the new requirements in the workplace (Nzimande, 1991; Wella, 1983). As the qualifications of black Africans improved, educational requirements and performance standards were set higher to avoid standards being lowered (Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 199; Watts, 1985). As a result, most black Africans held more qualifications when compared to peers in similar roles (Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). According to Nzimande (1991), members of dominant groups could continue to retain power and control in the workplace as black Africans had to be doubly qualified or work twice as hard to access job opportunities or promotions.

Bell and Nkomo (2001) also discussed the experiences of African-American managers who occupied high-status positions in their organizations but who were part of subordinate racial and gender groups. According to Bell and Nkomo (2001), participants in their study occupied an outsider-within status. These African-American women had managed to access high-status positions in white-dominated organizations but they were not accepted in these contexts (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). The strategies that research participants in this study used to manage their outsider-within status included accepting that they would never be part of the in-group, developing the ability to identify whether their failings were due to structural barriers or personal limitations and assuming a professional identity that was characterized by self-confidence, competence and resilience (Bell & Nkomo, 2001).

4.2. 2. Signalling Theory, Dramaturgical Performances and Emotional Labour

Racial and class hierarchies in institutions are maintained through daily interactions (Gray et al., 2018). Gatekeepers make decisions on which participants can access the workplace or be promoted based on information that is readily available in the workplace or interrelated institutions (Karasek & Bryant, 2012). Gatekeepers use available information regarding the symbolic capital of different groups to evaluate participants based on observable characteristics (Karasek & Bryant, 2012). According to Connelly et al. (2011), when participants are part of a group that has low symbolic capital, gatekeepers collect information from multiple sources to ensure that they make the right decisions. Thus, members of groups with low symbolic capital have to also meet informal standards that are set by gatekeepers (Karasek & Bryant, 2012). These informal standards serve as structural barriers as members of subordinate groups have additional requirements to meet (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Piff et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the standards that members of subordinate groups have to meet evolve as a significant number of them start meeting set requirements (Connelly et al., 2011; Karasek & Bryant, 2012). Connelly et al. (2011) state that members of groups that have low symbolic capital and are invested in experiencing upward mobility tend to invest in signals that will facilitate their mobility. This leads to gatekeepers not being able to distinguish between high and low-quality participants (Connelly et al., 2011; Karasek & Bryant, 2012). For example, the massification of tertiary education has made it difficult for gatekeepers to distinguish candidates based on their qualifications (Connelly et al., 2011). According to Karasek and Bryant (2012), as signals evolve the criteria used to distinguish between members of subordinate and dominant groups starts to become arbitrary. Criteria such as language articulations, choice of clothes, hairstyles or interactional styles start being used to distinguish participants (Piff et al., 2018).

The cost of participating in valued institutions is also higher for members of groups with low symbolic capital as they have to acquire additional signals or continually update their signals to differentiate themselves from members of their social group who are perceived as low-quality by gatekeepers (Connelly et al., 2011; Karasek & Bryant, 2012). For example, acquiring an overseas qualification distinguishes candidates from low-status groups whilst members of the dominant group do not need this signal to show their competence (Konyali, 2018; Rezai, 2017; Yagbasan, 2019). Myers (2013) and Dlamini (2013) also found that black African executives in their studies held more qualifications when compared with their peers from other race groups. Thus, members of groups with low symbolic capital who have a class advantage are better placed to meet additional and evolving capital requirements in the workplace when compared to members of the same group who form part of the working class (Dlamini, 2013; Meghji, 2017).

Participants who are members of groups that have low symbolic capital also use social class signals to convince gatekeepers of their suitability (Karasek & Bryant, 2012). The signals selected in most valued institutions generate a hierarchy that places individuals who are lower on the class and race rung at a disadvantage (Karasek & Bryant, 2012; Piff et al., 2018). Durr and Wingfield (2011) found that African-American professionals in their study indicated that they signalled that they were a culture fit by blending their behaviour, dress code and ideas to match those of gatekeepers in white-dominated organizations. Meghji (2017) further found that black participants in her study deployed a private school English accent to signal their suitability to gatekeepers. According to Piff et al. (2018); most signals cannot be faked as evaluators can reliably deduce a person's social class based on limited interactions.

Some research participants likened signalling to a performance that they enacted so that gatekeepers could see them as a culture fit (Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Piff et al., 2018; Travis & Thorpe-Moscon, 2018). When these research participants were not in the workplace, they reverted to dress codes, conversations or language articulations that were natural to them (Meghji, 2017). Piff et al. (2018) further state that human beings do not only use signals to indicate their fit but they also use signals to avoid aggressive interactions with members of dominant groups. Studies conducted on the experiences of African-American professionals in the workplace found that this group experienced racial micro-aggressions in the workplace (Bell & Nkomo, 2001, Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Holder et al., 2015). Female African-American managers in a study conducted by Bell and Nkomo (2001) indicated that they were made to feel that they did not belong in the workplace through acts of rejection and exclusion. African-American professionals in a study conducted by Durr and Wingfield (2011) also indicated that they blended in at work for their safety because they did not want to get into unnecessary conflict with gatekeepers.

According to Chong (2009), members of dominant groups are normatively allowed to engage in offensive behaviour when interacting with members of subordinate groups because class and racial hierarchies in most contexts are regarded as natural. Members of subordinate groups are held to a higher standard and they are expected to be considerate, decent, and professional (Chong, 2009). Durr and Wingfield (2011) found that African-American professionals in their study indicated that they tempered their emotions, remained expressionless and smiled on cue when engaged in derogatory conversations with members of dominant groups in the workplace. Fine and Manning (2003) explain that Goffman argued that individuals who operate in institutions that demean them cooperate because of the benefits that they receive from these institutions. African-American participants in a study conducted by Durr and Wingfield (2011) also indicated that they cooperated with gatekeepers because they wanted to experience upward career mobility and have financial stability.

Goffman identified four non-confrontational strategies that members of subordinate groups deployed when navigating environments where it was normatively allowed for members of the dominant group to symbolically attack them (Fine & Manning, 2003). Some members of subordinate groups withdrew by not taking interest in happenings around them, others only resisted when they felt that gatekeepers had crossed the line and some made the best of the situation by only focusing on the positive aspects of the institution that they were in (Fine and Manning, 2003). Other individuals accepted or pretended to accept the ideology governing the institution that they were in (Fine & Manning, 2003). Modisha (2008) used the framework developed by Goffman to explore strategies deployed by black Africans in middle-class occupations. Modisha (2008) found that there were black Africans in his study who fitted the converted category and these black Africans were happy in their workplaces and were emotionally invested in getting promotions. Modisha (2008) noted that most of

these black Africans worked in organizations that valued diversity. Black Africans who worked in workplaces that did not value diversity fell into the categories of rebels who challenged inequality in the workplace, play it cool black Africans who were critical about inequalities in the workplace but kept quiet when at work or the colonised who made an effort to acquire the disposition and capital of the dominant groups (Modisha, 2008).

4.2. 3. Alternative Paths to Social Mobility

Studies that explore alternative paths to upward social mobility aim to explain how individuals who occupy low positions on the social class and racial hierarchies in their countries enter middle-class occupations when similar others make up a majority in low-skilled jobs (Zhou et al., 2008). This area of research mainly studies the social mobility trajectories of second-generation immigrants from working-class families who made it against all odds (Crul et al. , 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; Rezai, 2017; Yagbasan, 2019). In most societies, members of low-status groups who make it against all odds are used as examples to argue that if other members of their group also worked hard they too would succeed (Konyali, 2018). A majority of individuals who have made it against all odds also endorse this view and their narratives of upward mobility attribute most of their success to their agency (Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Rezai, 2017; Yagasban, 2019).

Studies indicate that ethnic or racial minorities from working-class backgrounds who have managed to access middle-class occupations and advance in the workplace position themselves as active participants in the field (Crul et al., 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). These individuals face the same

structural barriers that other members of their group experience but they find ways to turn these disadvantages into advantages (Crul et al., 2017; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). Yagasban (2019) found that participants in his study acknowledged that racial discrimination existed in the workplace but these participants did not let this discrimination distract them from what they wanted to achieve. Some of these participants argued that focusing on discrimination inadvertently painted one as a victim (Yagasban, 2019). Participants in a study conducted by Konyali (2018) also stated that they did not want to be labelled as victims of discrimination and these participants downplayed structural barriers and incidents of discrimination that they had experienced. Other participants dealt directly with incidents of discrimination or resolved to work harder to prove their detractors wrong (Konyali, 2018; Yagasban, 2019).

Individuals who refuse to carry the mantle of victimhood sometimes promote their resilience to cope with discrimination as a mantle of honour (Hammond et al., 2007; Konyali, 2018). Individuals who struggle to cope with discrimination or overcome structural barriers are perceived as weak (Hammond et al., 2007; Konyali, 2018; Myres, 2013). For example, a participant in a study conducted by Myres (2013) argued that black African executives who could not survive anti-black organizational cultures had failed tests of resilience and these executives had no capabilities to sustain themselves through the pain of discrimination. This outlook leaves structural barriers unaddressed and those who cannot succeed are labelled as failures, weak, having a victim mentality or lacking the stomach required to succeed in hostile environments (Hammond et al., 2007; Konyali, 2018; Myres, 2013).

Furthermore, the majority of upwardly mobile working-class individuals who perceive themselves as active agents accept that workplaces are not meritocratic (Crul et al., 2017a;

Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). These individuals enter middle-class workplaces with a vision of what they want to achieve and as a result, they find ways to overcome obstacles in their environments and to adapt to changing situations (Yagasban, 2019). Their vision sustains them through structural barriers and racial discrimination (Yagasban, 2019). Studies further found that ethnic or racial minorities overcame barriers in their work environments by leveraging opportunities provided in different national contexts, occupations and companies (Crul et al., 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). Konyai (2018) found that some participants in his study chose to build an international profile by studying in elite universities in their home country, acquiring an overseas qualification to set themselves apart and working for multinational companies to acquire international exposure. Multinational companies enabled members of low-status groups to bypass local racial or class hierarchies as these companies had cultures that valued diversity (Crul et al., 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b, 2017; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019).

Some racial or ethnic minorities also chose to work in their communities and this enabled them to occupy leadership positions as they were part of the dominant group in that social environment (MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019). Some members of this group who worked in the corporate sector also chose to work in divisions that catered for their ethnic group or to be representatives of international companies in countries that their parents had emigrated from (Crul et al., 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). Crul et al. (2017b) further mention that some research participants in their study chose professions that maximised their capital. For example, promotions in the French education sector are linked to state exams and this sector was attractive to those who were not members

of the dominant group (Crul et al., 2017b). Upward career mobility in this sector was perceived by members of low-status groups as merit-based (Crul et al., 2017b).

Research participants who were members of low-status groups also indicated that upwardly mobile individuals from this group needed to have well-developed social skills to experience upward career mobility (Crul et al., 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). Social skills enabled ethnic or racial minorities to deal with discrimination in a manner that did not burn bridges; to learn and make mistakes whilst also ensuring that mistakes are not held against them and to move from being outsiders to insiders (Crul et al., 2017; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). Social skills further enabled ethnic or racial minorities from working-class backgrounds to form relationships with influential members of the dominant group (Crul et al., 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; MidtbØen & Nadim, 2019; Yagasban, 2019). Crul et al. (2017b) argue that relationships with influential members of the dominant group are instrumental in facilitating the upward career mobility of members of low-status groups. This assertion was also supported by some upwardly mobile black Africans (Dlamini, 2013; Magojo, 1996; Myres, 2013).

Townsend and Troung (2017) argue that those who want to experience upward career mobility in middle-class workplaces need to build and maintain broad networks. These networks must enable ethnic or racial minorities to access valued opportunities and advice on how to navigate the game played in the field (Crul et al., 2017b). Rezai (2017) further mentions that relationships with members of the key network must be developed to a level where the networks have the best interests of the upwardly mobile person at heart. Participants in a study conducted by Rezai (2017) also indicated that members of low-status

groups needed to be amiable and reliable to build sustainable relationships with others. Participants in a study conducted by Crul et al. (2017b) further stated that members of low-status groups needed to succeed when doors have been opened for them so that their networks have the confidence to open more doors for them.

4.2. 4. Minority Culture of Mobility

The minority culture of mobility explains the upward mobility experiences of middle-class African-Americans who are a minority in the workplace because of their race and a minority in their communities because of their social class (Neckerman et al., 1999). These African-Americans are argued to face problems that are unique to their group as they have more inter-racial contact than their working-class peers and more inter-class contact than white people (Clerge, 2014; Neckerman et al., 1999; Slootman, 2018). According to Bell and Nkomo (2011), African-Americans in middle-class occupations are bicultural as they move between two cultural contexts that have different social and behavioural demands.

Heflin and Pattillo (2006) state that middle-class African-Americans are more likely to have working-class siblings when compared to middle-class whites. Heflin and Pattillo (2006) further state that middle-class African-Americans who have economically disadvantaged relatives are likely to experience being middle-class differently because of the financial obligations they have toward their kin. African-Americans raised working class are more likely to receive requests for financial assistance from their relatives (Higginbotham & Weber, 1992). Bell and Nkomo (2011) state that African-Americans are raised to help those who are less fortunate and to lift members of their racial group as they move up. However, not all African-Americans employ an interdependent model of self when navigating the world

(Steele, 1988). Steele (1998, p.47) states "It has always annoyed me to hear from the mouths of certain arbiters of blackness that middle-class blacks should "reach back" and pull up those blacks less fortunate than they-as though middle-class status were an unearned and essentially passive condition."

According to Neckermann et al. (1999), upward mobility for African-Americans involves navigating politics around racial loyalty and racial authenticity. Carter (2003) explains that social groups create cultural barriers that separate insiders and outsiders and these barriers elevate the status of insiders. Carter (2003) further explains that the cultural capital valued in one context or by a group might be devalued in another context or by another group. For example, using Standard English is valued in middle-class contexts but it is disparaged as "acting white" in working-class African-American contexts (Carter, 2003). Slootman (2018) also indicates that upwardly mobile Morrocan and Turkish second-generation immigrants in his study were pressured to behave according to the norms of their birth culture. Upwardly mobile Morrocan and Turkish immigrants who were not compliant were labelled as race traitors or white-washed (Slootman, 2018). To counteract accusations of racial disloyalty, upwardly mobile minorities gave back to their kin or community to show ethnic or racial solidarity (Neckermann et al., 1999; Slootman, 2018).

African-Americans who are a minority in white-dominated workplaces are required to conform to western and middle-class cultures to experience career success in these contexts (Carter, 2003; Neckerman et al., 1999). Their speech, dress code and demeanour are scrutinized to assess their fit, intelligence and affability (Carter, 2003; Neckerman et al., 1999). Furthermore, African-Americans in middle-class occupations navigate work environments where they are hyper-visible because of being part of a minority group or they

are treated as invisible and excluded from work-related or social activities (Holder et al., 2015; Neckerman et al., 1999). Differences between African-American professionals and members of the dominant group are further exaggerated to maintain existing power relations (Bell & Nkomo, 2001).Those African-Americans who want to experience upward mobility or avoid acrimonious interactions with gatekeepers signal their fit by adhering to accepted norms (Carter, 2003; Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Travis & Thorpe-Moscon, 2018).

Studies indicate that there were African-Americans who deployed the strategy of code-switching when navigating African-American and white contexts. This strategy involved changing one's dress code, interactional style and language according to the requirements of a context (Carter, 2003; Gray et al., 2018; Holder et al., 2015; Neckerman et al., 1999). Upwardly mobile individuals further coped with working in white-dominated contexts by creating safe social spaces where they could recharge (Bell & Nkomo, 2011; Neckerman et al., 1999). This strategy involved forming trusted relationships with other African-Americans in middle-class occupations, spending time with kin or spending time in social contexts dominated by other African-Americans (Bell & Nkomo, 2011; Neckerman et al., 1999). Female African-American executives in a study conducted by Holder et al. (2015) further indicated that they used the history of their racial group or biographies that were written by other African-Americans to strengthen themselves.

4.3. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed different theoretical perspectives that explain strategies that members of low-status groups deploy in the workplace to advance or maintain their position. These strategies include choosing work contexts that are likely to facilitate upward career mobility,

building and maintaining relationships with gatekeepers and acquiring the cultural capital valued in the workplace. Ethnic or racial minorities also developed coping strategies that assisted them in dealing with racial discrimination. These strategies included spending time with people in their communities, building resilience and finding ways to overcome barriers in the work context.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

5.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

5.1.1. Intepretivist Research Paradigm

The focus of this study was to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations through qualitative research methods utilizing an interpretivist lens (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). Interpretivism argues that people do not share a unitary view of the world as they ascribe multiple meanings to their lived experiences (Sefotho, 2015). This viewpoint is aligned with the Bourdieusian Approach that is being used in this current study as a theoretical framework. The Bourdieusian Approach argues that people develop different ways of perceiving the world based on their family upbringing, the positions that they occupy on societal structures and exposure to different socio-cultural contexts (Crossley, 2014; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). The Bourdieusian Approach further argues that individuals who are navigating similar structures can select different strategies based on the feedback that they have received from previous actions and the frameworks that they apply to understand happenings in the field (Wacquant, 2006).

The research paradigm of interpretivism was further suitable for this study as the intention of the current study was not to produce a theory or to reveal a universal truth on the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations (Krauss, 2005; Staller, 2012; Willis, 2012). The study was designed to understand the social mobility experiences of

black Africans within a specific socio-cultural context (Krauss, 2005; Staller, 2012; Willis, 2012). As a result, the findings in the current study cannot be generalized to other contexts (Krauss, 2005; Staller, 2012; Willis, 2012). Willis (2012) states that some scholars regard this lack of generalizability as a weakness of interpretivist studies. Willis (2012), however, argues that the lack of generalizability does not mean that other scholars cannot use the results of interpretivist studies but these scholars have to critically evaluate the results of a study and use only what is applicable in their contexts.

Black Africans form part of marginalised groups in South African workplaces as they occupy lower positions in most organizational hierarchies (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Studies further indicate that black Africans in middle-class occupations experience racial microaggressions that aim to entrench their subordinate position in this context (Canham & Williams, 2017; Carey, 2018; Dlamini. 2013; Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Sefotho (2015) states that interpretivism is criticised for ignoring hierarchies of power in different societies and as a consequence for producing accounts that have the potential to marginalise members of disadvantaged groups. Research conducted from a critical research paradigm is promoted as remedying this oversight as it links the experiences of subordinated groups to larger contexts (Fraser, 2004; Lanford et al., 2018; Willis, 2012). The critical research paradigm further challenges structures that socially exclude others and it condemns practices that contribute to the oppression, inequality and unjust treatment of others (Fraser, 2004; Lanford et al., 2018; Willis, 2012).

Although black Africans continue to be disadvantaged in South African workplaces, this study did not adopt a critical research paradigm as the current study assumes that black Africans can occupy subordinate or dominant positions in the work environment based on

hierarchies prevalent in a context (Charmaz, 2017). This study considers workplace contexts where national racial hierarchies do not apply and black Africans are members of the dominant group (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). The current study also acknowledges that black Africans in middle-class occupations are positioned differently from black Africans in low-skilled jobs. According to Townsend and Troung (2017), members of subordinate groups either struggle to access middle-class occupations or they struggle to advance once they have accessed middle-class occupations. Black Africans in middle-class occupations mostly struggle with politics of acceptance that affect their opportunities for career advancement whereas black Africans in low-skilled jobs struggle to access middle-class occupations (de Coninck, 2018). Hence, the nature of the disadvantage experienced by black Africans who occupy different positions in organizational structures is not the same (de Coninck, 2018). To move away from race essentialism, the current study adopted a research paradigm that was flexible enough to allow black Africans in middle-class occupations to move between positions of dominance and subordination.

Willis (2012) admits that interpretivist studies do not challenge hierarchies in society but argues that these studies provide multiple perspectives regarding a topic. The perspectives provided have the potential to challenge taken-for -granted ideas or to generate debates that promote inclusive solutions to social problems (Andrews, 2012; Staller, 2012). Willis (2012) further states that researchers conducting interpretivist studies accept that research participants have different lived experiences and these research participants are likely to provide contradicting accounts of the phenomenon being studied. Willis (2012), however, indicates that researchers do not have to accept accounts that disadvantage marginalized groups as equally valid. Researchers, though, must acknowledge that these perspectives exist

and reflect on whether their own biases are influencing them to discount these viewpoints (Willis, 2012).

5.1.2. Epistemology of Social Constructionism

Social constructionism argues that human beings construct social reality through their actions, interactions and by institutionalising social practices (Knoblauch, 2020; Weinberg, 2009). The main aim of social constructionism is to study how and why knowledge comes to be accepted as common sense in a society (Knoblauch, 2020; Weinberg, 2009). Weinberg (2009) explains that some detractors and supporters of social constructionism equate the concept of a socially constructed reality to an imaginary or mythical reality. Social constructionism distinguishes between the natural and social world (Knoblauch, 2020; Weinberg, 2009). The natural world operates on absolute laws that can be scientifically discovered whilst the social world is constructed through an interplay between people's subjective realities and their interaction with the environment (Krauss, 2005; Staller, 2012; Willis, 2007, 2012).

Weinberg (2009) explains that there is a natural reality that is realistic. For example, human beings are born with different skin colours and this is a fact that can be observed. Social class, on the other hand, is a socially constructed idea that has multiple meanings that are context-specific (Andrews, 2012). Classifications of social class can be generated, modified or reconstructed through negotiations with others (Andrews, 2012). Thus, social constructionism explains a social reality that is abstract, given meaning by human beings through creating hierarchies of discrimination and that varies over time because of changes in political, cultural and social contexts (Willis, 2012). Social constructionists who ascribe to

the ideas of Berger and Luckmann believe that knowledge comes to be accepted as common-sense by society through externalization, internalization and reification (Andrews, 2012; Knoblauch, 2020; Weinberg, 2009).

The epistemology of social constructionism was chosen as suitable for this study as it is aligned with arguments made in the current study that the racialised economic structure that is currently prevalent in South Africa was socially and historically created through laws and practices that externalized racial hierarchies (Andrews, 2012; Knoblauch, 2020; Weinberg, 2009). This study further argued that this racialised economic structure has persisted in post-apartheid South Africa through historical institutional practices and internalized patterned social interactions (Andrews, 2012; Knoblauch, 2020; Weinberg, 2009). Moreover, the current study has also argued that over time South Africans have become unaware that racial hierarchies in the country reflect historical socio-cultural practices (Andrews, 2012). Societal discussions on issues such as black diamonds or racialised competence reflect that South Africans still question the legitimacy of black Africans being part of the middle-class or being employed in middle-class occupations (Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Posel, 2010; Steinfield & Scott, 2013; Steyn & Foster, 2008). The arguments for why black Africans are not suitable to be part of the middle class or to occupy middle-class occupations are also based on historical racial stereotypes (Ndzwayiba et al., 2018; Steyn & Foster, 2008).

5.1.3. Ontology of Dualism

Gray (2014) states that ontology is concerned with what constitutes social reality or the nature of social reality. Reality can be understood from the perspective of objectivism where there is an impartial reality that can be uncovered by researchers (Gray, 2014; Wacquant,

2006). Reality can also be understood from a perspective of subjectivism where there are multiple realities that are equally valid (Gray, 2014; Wacquant, 2006). According to Andrews (2012), there are two strands of social constructionism-strict social constructionism and contextual social constructionism. Strict social constructionism is underpinned by a relativist ontology that endorses the idea of relative realities (Andrews, 2012). In contrast, contextual social constructionism acknowledges that a context has an objective reality that is institutionalised in structures and a subjective reality that exists in the minds of those who participate in the social structures (Andrews, 2012).

According to Wacquant (2006), Bourdieu argued that social reality could not be fully understood from a subjectivist or objectivist perspective. Bourdieu developed the concepts of field, Doxa, habitus and capital to bridge the chasm between subjectivism and objectivism (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). Habitus is a subjective concept that explains the disposition of individuals and it is a product of the material world that a person lives in, socialization and practices that are institutionalised (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). A field is an objective structure that has dominant groups that set capital requirements to preserve their position and subordinate groups that struggle to meet these requirements (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006). Individuals navigate objective structures that present social mobility opportunities and constraints in the external environment and they also use their perceptions to decide what is likely, possible or impossible for them in terms of their social mobility (Barrett, 2015; Wacquant, 2006).

This study identified normative culture-specific selves and strategies that were based on the subjective realities of the research participants in the current study. The study further explored the social mobility experiences of research participants in objective gateway

contexts of home, school and work. These gateway contexts have hierarchies that offer different opportunities and barriers to participants (Barrett, 2015; Moore, 2014). The hierarchies in the work context can be objectively verified through reports produced by the Commission for Employment Equity (2019, 2020). The hierarchies in the education sector can also be substantiated through studies that used results of panel surveys or assessment results from local and international tests (de Clercq, 2020). Thus, the current study is underpinned by a view that social mobility is an outcome of an interplay between individuals' subjective realities and objective structures in the environment (Barrett, 2015; Moore, 2014).

5.2. NARRATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a narrative research method to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. The narrative research method falls under the umbrella of qualitative research methodology (Frost, 2011). Qualitative researchers who employ narrative research are interested in the stories that participants tell when making meaning of their experiences (Esin et al., 2014). Research participants are allowed to use their own words to describe their experiences and the data that is generated is non-numerical (Greener, 2013; Flick, 2011; Urquhart, 2017). When employing the narrative research method, researchers assume that research participants do not construct original stories as the constructed stories are underpinned by available cultural narratives that different groups use in society to organize social life (Esin et al., 2014; Smith, 2016). Thus, when people tell their stories they select from a menu of available cultural narratives and they also take up a position promoted by that narrative (Esin et al., 2014). Furthermore, the stories told by research participants can be similar or different based on the narratives that they have

selected and research participants can also provide contradicting accounts of their own stories as they are not constrained to one narrative (Esin et al., 2014; Smith, 2016).

Qualitative researchers do not subscribe to the view that researchers discover the truth in research settings but they accept that researchers attempt to represent, through interpretation, the complexities of a research setting (Greener, 2013; Flick, 2011). Moen (2006) states that qualitative researchers who utilize narrative research present in their studies stories that research participants told them about specific experiences, the meanings that research participants made of their experiences, the contexts within which the experiences were acquired and interpretations of researchers regarding the stories told. Smith (2016) further argues that the stories told by research participants do not reflect their internal states but they are vehicles used by participants to take up a position that explains their perceptions, feelings or actions. Furthermore, the stories of research participants are temporal and they reflect contextually bound experiences (Smith, 2016). These stories can change if research participants are exposed to new contexts or experiences (Smith, 2016).

The knowledge that is generated in qualitative research is context-specific and it is influenced by historical, cultural, interactional and social processes (Staller, 2012). Esin et al. (2014) state that qualitative researchers who use the narrative research method underpinned by social constructionism in their studies need to explore power relations in different settings when contextualising stories. These researchers should also study the positions of research participants on social hierarchies and how these positions influence the viewpoints shared by research participants (Esin, 2011). Qualitative researchers employing narrative research must further explain how taken-for-granted cultural narratives privilege certain groups whilst silencing other groups (Esin et al., 2014). According to Fraser (2004), the experiences of

research participants cannot be fully understood without taking into account practices of domination or social exclusion in social structures. Fraser (2004) further argues that the experiences of research participants can also not be fully understood if the agency of research participants is denied and all the actions of research participants are attributed to social structures. Esin et al. (2014) also argue that researchers utilizing narrative research underpinned by social constructionism view power as interpersonal, diverse, mobile and contestable. The above-mentioned issues were considered in the current study during the data analysis process.

Qualitative researchers do not also separate themselves from the research process as they acknowledge that they bring into the process their social backgrounds, personal experiences and theoretical assumptions (Shacklock & Thorp, 2005). Furthermore, qualitative researchers acknowledge that the results obtained in their studies are influenced by their viewpoints as they are the main instrument that collects, analyses and interprets data (Krauss, 2005; Staller, 2012; Weinberg, 2009). Thus, qualitative researchers are transparent in their reports about how their social positions could have influenced how they interpreted the stories of research participants (Staller, 2012). Research participants also bring into the interview setting their experiences, how they understand the world, their social location and an overarching narrative that they want the researcher to walk away with (Moen, 2006). Stories told in interviews are co-created by researchers and research participants and participants might share different stories with researchers who are considered insiders versus outsiders (Kraus, 2005; Staller, 2012). The current study provides an autobiographical reflection that makes it clear how my position might have affected my interpretation of the stories told by research participants.

5.3. SAMPLING

Purposive sampling was used to select research participants who were suitable to be part of this study. All research participants had to meet the criteria of being black Africans, employed in middle-class occupations and having tertiary qualifications. To answer key research questions in this study, the sample included black Africans raised working-class and black Africans raised middle-class. Furthermore, the sample also included black Africans who worked in black African-dominated organizations and those who worked in white-dominated organizations.

Study participants were recruited through my professional and personal networks. I initially invited participants who met the criteria of my study and whom I had met in a professional or personal capacity to be part of the study. I managed to recruit ten (10) participants using this method. A relative posted details of my study on Facebook and her Whatsapp status wall. Through this method, I managed to find another twelve (12) participants. Two participants from this group were interviewed but excluded from the final study. One participant was a naturalized South African who grew up in another country. The other participant was excluded because I struggled to establish rapport with her.

Gentles et al. (2010) state that qualitative research has smaller samples when compared to quantitative research. However, there is no ideal sample size in qualitative research (Gentles et al., 2015; Higginbotham, 2013; Higginbottom, 2004; Marshall, 1996). In this study, the aim was to have a sample size that would allow me to collect rich information that could be used for analysis whilst also ensuring that I do not collect too much information resulting in my research participants blending into each other (Higginbotham, 2013; Riessman &

Quinney, 2005). According to Riessman and Quinney (2005), narrative research is not an appropriate method for studies that render research participants nameless and faceless. The aim of narrative research is to highlight the experiences of research participants, clarify the positions that research participants occupy in hierarchical structures and to also make clear the contexts within which stories are taking place (Crossley, 2011; Fraser, 2011; Smith, 2016).

5.4. STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Twenty (20) black Africans who work in middle-class occupations were interviewed in this study. Of those interviewed, seven (7) were raised in working-class homes and thirteen (13) in middle-class homes. Except for two participants, all the other participants worked in organizations that are based in the Gauteng Province. Of these two participants, one worked in the Limpopo Province and the other in the North West Province. Thirteen (13) of the participants in the current study worked in white-dominated contexts and seven (7) in black African-dominated contexts. All the participants who worked in black African-dominated contexts were employed by the public service sector.

Overall, thirteen (13) of the participants were females and seven (7) were males. Five (5) participants were employed at an executive level, six (6) at a managerial level, four (4) at a senior specialist level and five (5) at a specialist level. Of the participants interviewed, sixteen (16) participants indicated that they had experienced upward mobility when compared to their parents or guardians and one (1) participant stated that she had experienced static mobility. Two (2) participants mentioned that they had not reached the socio-economic status of their

parents and one (1) participant stated that he could not compare his socio-economic status with that of his mother as the standard of living was lower in the past.

5.4.1. Life Histories of Research Participants

Table 3 summarizes the life histories of research participants raised working-class and Table 4 summarizes the life histories of research participants raised middle-class. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of research participants.

Table 3: Life histories of research participants raised woking-class

Relebogile Kgapola	Relebogile Kgapola is a 62-year-old female who grew up in a rural village in Limpopo. Relebogile was orphaned at a young age and she was raised by her aunt and stepmother. Her aunt had minimal education and she worked in shops in the nearby town. Relebogile completed her primary and high school education in rural schools that only had black African teachers and black African students. After high school, Relebogile completed her professional training in teaching. Whilst working, she further completed her bachelor's and post-graduate degrees through distance learning. Relebogile currently holds an MBA and another Masters degree. She occupies an executive-level position in the public service sector. She has spent most of her working life in organizations that were dominated by black Africans. Relebogile perceives that her current socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her guardians
Mokgadi Maputla	Mokgadi Maputla is a 50-year-old female who grew up in a rural village in Limpopo. Mokgadi was orphaned when she was five years old and she grew up living with her aunt, great- grandmother and six cousins. Her aunt was a housewife who sustained the family through seasonal farm work and the wages of her husband who was a migrant worker. Mokgadi completed her primary and high school education in rural schools that only had black African teachers and black African students. After high school, she completed her training in professional nursing. Whilst working, she further obtained her first three degrees at a historically white university. Her PhD was attained abroad and Mokgadi currently occupies an executive- level position in a white-dominated organization. Her working experience spans organizations that were dominated by white people and those that were dominated by black Africans. Mokgadi perceives that her current socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her guardians.
Sipho Dlamini	Sipho Dlamini is a 45-year-old male who was raised in an urban township in Gauteng. He grew up living with his parents, grandmother and five siblings. His father worked as a messenger and his mother provided kitchen services at her workplace. Sipho completed his primary school and high school education in urban township schools that only had black African teachers and black African students. Sipho attained his first degree at a historically black university and his postgraduate

	degrees at a historically white university. His highest qualification is a Masters degree. Sipho perceives that his current socio-economic status has improved when compared to that of his parents.
Tinyiko Baloi	Tinyiko Baloi is a 43-year-old female who was raised in an urban township in Gauteng. She grew up living between her grandmother's home and another home where her aunt, mother and two uncles stayed. Tinyiko grew up in a big family with her six siblings and cousins. Her mother worked as a cleaner. Tinyiko moved in with her mother in an inner city neighbourhood when she was 15 years old. She completed her primary and high school education in urban township schools that only had black African teachers and black African students. She obtained her first degree and her postgraduate degree from historically white universities. Tinyiko currently occupies an executive-level position in a white-dominated company. Tinyiko has spent most of her working life in organizations that were dominated by white people. She perceives that her current socio-economic status has improved when compared to that of her mother.
Noxolo Hobo	Noxolo Hobo is a 34-year-old female who grew up in a rural village in the Eastern Cape. She grew up in a home where her parents took care of children who had been orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Noxolo grew up around a lot of people and she regards the children who grew up in her family as her non-biological siblings. Her father owned a shop and her mother was a housewife. Noxolo started her primary school in a rural village school that only had black African teachers and black African students. She moved to a multiracial boarding school when she was in Grade 3. She completed high school in the same school and her degree at a University of Technology. Noxolo perceives that her current socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her parents.
Teboho Mohale	Teboho Mohale is a 33-year-old female who grew up in an urban township in the North West. She lived with her grandmother, mother, aunt and two cousins when she was growing up. Her mother worked as a domestic worker. Teboho completed her primary and high school education at black African schools. She attained her National Diploma at a Technical and Vocational and Training College. Teboho currently occupies a specialist-level position in the public service sector and she has only worked for organizations dominated by other black Africans. Teboho perceives that her socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her mother.
Lebohang Dube	Lebohang Dube is a 32 year old female who lived in an urban township until she was six years old then moved to an inner city neighbourhood in Gauteng. She grew up living with her mother and she has no siblings. Her mother worked as a domestic worker. Lebohang completed her primary and high school education in multiracial schools. She attained her Bachelor of Technology degree at a historically white university. Lebohang currently occupies a specialist level position in a white-dominated company. Her working experience spans organizations that were dominated by white people and those that were dominated by black Africans.She perceives that her current socio-economic status has improved when compared to that of her mother.

Table 4: Life histories of research participants raised middle-class

Phetogo Kgomo	Phetogo Kgomo is a 52-year-old male who spent the first seven years of his life living in a rural township. He then moved with his family to a rural village in Limpopo. He grew up living with his father, mother and sister. Phetogo's father worked as a church minister and his mother was a teacher. Phetogo completed his primary school education in a rural village school and his high school in a boarding

	school. Both the schools that he attended had only black African teachers and black African students. Phetogo started his first degree at a historically white university but completed this degree at a University of Technology. His highest qualification is a postgraduate diploma that he obtained from a private institution. Phetogo currently occupies a specialist-level position in a white-dominated company. He has spent most of his working life in organizations that were dominated by white people. Phetogo perceives that his current socio-economic status is lower when compared to that of his parents.
Banthatile Motaung	Banthatile Motaung is a 44-year-old female who was raised in a suburb in Gauteng. She grew up in a white, middle-class home with her brother, mother, godmother and godfather. She was co-raised by her mother and British godmother. Banthatile's mother worked as a domestic worker and Banthatile's godmother was her employer. Banthatile's godmother worked as a lawyer and her godfather was a geologist. Banthatile attended a multiracial Catholic private school during the apartheid era and a semi-private school in the post-apartheid era. She started her first degree at a long-distance public university but completed the degree at a private university. Her highest qualification is a postgraduate degree. Banthatile currently occupies a specialist-level position in a white-dominated company. She has spent most of her working life in organizations that were dominated by white people. Banthatile perceives that her socio-economic status is similar to that of her guardians.
Vuyokazi Ndamase	Vuyokazi Ndamase is a 43-year-old female who was raised in a rural village in the Eastern Cape. She grew up living with her mother, grandmother and cousin. Vuyokazi's mother worked as a teacher. She started her primary school in a rural village school and completed her high school in a school that was located between her rural village and a township close by. Vuyokazi completed her post-matric qualifications at historically white universities. Her highest qualifications are an MBA and a Masters Degree that she attained overseas. Vuyokazi currently occupies an executive-level position and her work experience spans international companies and organizations dominated by both white people and black Africans. Vuyokazi perceives that her socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her mother.
Thabang Motloung	Thabang Motloung is a 42-year-old male who was raised in an urban township in Gauteng. He grew up living with his mother, father and sibling. His mother worked as a nurse and his father worked as a miner. Thabang started his primary school at a Catholic boarding school and he also completed his high school education at the same school. This school had multiracial teachers and a black African student population. Thabang completed his tertiary education at a historically white university and he obtained his PhD at a university abroad. Thabang currently occupies a senior specialist position in a white-dominated company. His working experience spans companies that were dominated by white people and those that were dominated by black Africans. Thabang perceives that his current socio-economic status has improved when compared to that of his parents.
Phillip Bembe	Phillip Bembe is a 38-years-old male who was born to a Malawian father and a South African mother. He was born in South Africa and he lived in an urban township in Gauteng before his family moved to Malawi. He moved back from Malawi to South Africa with his mother and three siblings when he was 9 years old. They went to live in an inner city neighbourhood. Phillip's mother worked as a teacher. He completed his primary and high school education at multiracial schools. Phillip's highest qualification is a diploma that he attained whilst he was working. His working experience spans companies that were dominated by black Africans and those that were dominated by white people. Phillip perceives that his current socio-economic status cannot be compared with that of his mother as the standard of living was lower in the past. Phillip currently occupies a managerial position.

Reitumetse Mokwena	Reitumetse Mokwena is a 37-year-old female who was born in Zambia to parents who were in exile. Her father worked as a representative of the African National Congress in different countries and her mother worked as a teacher. Reitumetse started her school life in Belgium and then went to three different primary schools in South Africa. The first primary school was a government school that was predominately Jewish. The second primary school was a multiracial Catholic school and the third school was a multiracial primary school. Reitumetse completed her high school at an all-girls school that had white teachers and a predominately Black (Black African, Coloured and Indian) student population. She started her first degree at a historically white university but completed it through a public distance learning institution. She completed her honours degree at a private university in South Africa. Reitumetse perceives that her current socio-economic status has improved when compared to that of her parents when they were her age.
Thami Majola	Thami Majola is a 36-year-old male who was raised by his maternal grandparents in a rural village in the Eastern Cape until he was five years old. He then moved to a rural township where he lived with his mother who worked as a teacher. Thami started his primary school in a rural township school where his mother taught. After three years in the school, he moved to a multiracial school. When he was in Grade 7, he moved back to the rural township school. He completed high school at an all-boys multiracial school. He obtained his first degree at a historically coloured university and his honours degree at a private university in South Africa. Thami currently occupies a managerial position in a white-dominated company. His working experience spans organizations that were dominated by white people and those that were dominated by black Africans. He perceives that his current socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of his parents.
Katlego Mphahlele	Katlego Mphahlele is a 36-year-old male who was raised in a rural village in Limpopo. He grew up living with his father, mother and three siblings. Katlego's parents worked as teachers. Katlego started his primary school education in a village primary school where his mother taught. After two years in the school, he moved to a multiracial school in town. He then moved to a multiracial boarding school after another two years. When he was in Grade 6, he moved to a Catholic primary school that was a feeder school to the high school that his parents wanted him to attend. He completed high school at an all-boys Catholic school that had multiracial teachers and a black African student population. He further completed his degrees at a historically black African University. His highest qualification is a Masters degree. Katlego currently occupies a senior specialist-level position in a black African-dominated organization. He has spent most of his working life in organizations that were dominated by black Africans.
Thato Kgapola	Thato Kgapola is a 35-year-old female who was raised in a rural village in Limpopo until she was eight years old. When she turned nine, her family moved to the suburbs. Her father passed away shortly after her family moved to the suburbs. She grew up with her mother and three siblings. Her father was a school principal and her mother was a teacher. Thato started her primary school in a school that had white teachers but the student population was predominately black African. She then moved to a multiracial school where the student population was predominately white. Thato completed her high school at a former Afrikaans high school and she attained her degree at a historically white university. Thato currently occupies a managerial-level position and she has spent most of her working life in organizations that were dominated by white people. Thato indicated that she was still building toward the socio-economic position that her parents occupied.
Lethiwe Nkosi	Lethiwe Nkosi is a 35-year-old female who was raised in a rural village in Kwazulu Natal until she was eight years old. Her family then moved to a small town that had a predominately middle-class Indian population. Her father worked as a clerk and

	her mother as a teacher. Lethiwe started her primary school at a village school where her mother taught. After three years at the school, she moved to a multiracial Catholic school where she was allowed to skip Grade 4. She only spent a year at the Catholic school and then moved to a Coloured school for Grades 6 and 7. She completed high school in an Indian school. She obtained her first degree in a historically black African university and her postgraduate degrees in historically white universities. Her highest qualification is a Masters degree. Lethiwe perceives that her current socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her parents. She occupies a managerial position in the public service sector.
Mpho Mogano	Mpho Mogano is a 33-year-old male who grew up in the rural areas of Limpopo. He was raised by his maternal grandparents in a rural village until he was five years old. He then moved to a rural township where he lived with his father, mother and two siblings. His father worked as a teacher and his mother was a housewife. Mpho started his primary school in a rural township school that only had black African teachers and black African students. He then moved to an all-boys Catholic boarding school that had multiracial teachers and black African students when he was in high school. He completed his tertiary education at a historically white university. His highest qualification is an honours degree. Mpho currently occupies a managerial-level position in a white-dominated company. He has spent most of his working life in organizations that were dominated by white people. He perceives that his socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of his parents.
Lethabo Kgatla	Lethabo Kgatla is a 32-year-old female who grew up in a rural township in Limpopo. She lived with her father, mother and two siblings. Her mother worked as a school principal and her father worked as a consultant. Lethabo started her primary school in a small private school that had white teachers and black African students. She completed her high school in a multi-racial school. She attained her first and postgraduate degrees at a historically white university. Her highest qualification is a Masters degree. Lethabo currently occupies a senior-specialist level position in a black African-dominated company. Before this organization, Lethabo had only worked in companies that were dominated by white people. Lethabo perceives that her current socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her parents.
Tinyiko Maluleka	Tinyiko Maluleka is a 32-year-old female who grew up in a rural village in Limpopo. She grew up living with her parents, grandmother, aunt and one sibling. Her mother worked as an agricultural technician and her father was a qualified plumber. She started her primary school at a local primary school that only had black African teachers and students. She then completed her high school at a private school that had black African students and multiracial teachers. Her highest qualification is a Bachelor’s degree which she attained from a historically white university. Tinyiko has only worked in organizations that were dominated by white people. She currently occupies a specialist role. Tinyiko perceives that her socio-economic status is higher when compared to that of her parents.

5.5. DATA COLLECTION: LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEWS

In this study, life history interviews were conducted with research participants to collect their social mobility experiences. Life history interviews enable researchers to collect personal stories that research participants tell about their lives when sharing their perceptions of

certain events (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Greener, 2013; Lanford et al., 2018). Ojermark (2007) states that researchers sometimes use the terms life story and life history interchangeably. According to Ojemark (2007), life stories are personal accounts that are told to a researcher whereas life histories are life stories that a researcher has interpreted. When interpreting the personal stories of research participants, researchers place these stories in a social, economic, cultural, political or historical setting (Greener, 2013; Lanford et al., 2018; Shacklock & Thorp, 2005). The aim of interpreting personal stories is to understand how the social world, experiences and viewpoints of research participants have changed over time and space (Goodson, 2001; Greener, 2013; Ojermark, 2007). Ojemark (2007) further states that when analysing life histories, researchers aim to understand the interplay between personal agency and structural conditions as well as the circumstances that have prompted research participants to change their perspectives or behaviour (Ojemark, 2007).

The interview guide used to collect data in this study was developed to understand the social mobility experiences of participants through the gateway contexts of home, school and work. Stephens et al. (2014) argue that these gateway contexts shape normative culture-specific selves and they provide unequal opportunities to participants to experience upward mobility. The initial interview guide in this study was reviewed by an experienced qualitative researcher who indicated that it was too long and needed to be more focused. This expert also offered advice on how questions could be phrased to elicit stories. The first interview guide was revised and piloted with a black African female in a middle-class occupation. The purpose of piloting the interview guide was to assess whether the interview guide elicited meaningful information about the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations (Kallio et al., 2016).

The questions in the first and second interview guides were arranged thematically and the pilot interviewee suggested that the interview would flow better if the questions regarding the social mobility experiences of participants were asked chronologically. This interviewee further suggested that some questions needed to be simplified as the language used was too academic . Furthermore, she suggested that the introduction should be refined so that participants would know that I was interested in their personal stories and not in the general experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. The pilot interviewee also indicated that some of the questions asked assumed that participants had experienced upward career mobility and this line of questioning had made her uncomfortable. The said interview questions were changed to make them neutral. The second interview guide was amended based on the information collected in the first pilot interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). This interview guide was piloted with a second interviewee and no changes were suggested by this participant. The first pilot interview was not included in the final sample but the second pilot interview was. The semi-structured interview guide used in this study can be found in Appendix One.

Telephonic interviews were conducted with research participants and these interviews were opened with an introduction that reiterated the purpose of the study, highlighted that participation in the study was voluntary and that the data collected will be treated as confidential (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Dawson, 2002; Urquhart, 2017). Research participants were further informed that they had a right to withdraw from the research process at any point and to opt not to answer questions if they felt uncomfortable (Guthrie, 2010; Oliver, 2013). Verbal consent was obtained from all research participants before the interviews were conducted (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Dawson, 2002; Urquhart, 2017). During the interviews, I asked open-ended questions, adopted a non-directive interviewing style and treated research

participants with respect (Oliver, 2013; Tracy, 2010). Participants in this study were further given an opportunity at the end of the interview to revisit their answers, ask questions or make comments. I closed the interview process by thanking the participants. The average time that most interviews lasted was between forty-five (45) minutes and an hour.

During the interviews, I made an effort to minimize the discomfort of participants by gauging whether they were uneasy when answering questions. If a participant provided a cursory answer to a question, I would ask follow-up questions. When it became clear that there was growing discomfort in the voice of a research participant, I would move on to the next question. After the interview, some research participants wanted to continue the conversation but these conversations would be focused on a specific question or theme explored in the interview. With these participants, I let them talk out the issue that aroused their discomfort or conflict and these conversations continued until the research participants were comfortable enough to terminate the call. These conversations were not recorded.

5.6. DATA ANALYSIS STRATEGY

A social constructionism approach to narrative analysis was used to analyse the data collected in this study. This data analysis approach places the personal stories of research participants within a socio-cultural context (Crossley, 2011; Esin, 2011; Smith, 2016). The social constructionism approach to narrative analysis further recognizes the duality of stories told by research participants (Crossley, 2011; Esin, 2011; Smith, 2016). The stories told by research participants reflect their subjective personal experiences and objective contexts that shape these experiences (Smith, 2016). Scholars argue that there are no prescriptive steps on how to

conduct a narrative analysis, however, there are guidelines that researchers can follow to analyse personal stories (Crossley, 2011; Esin, 2011; Smith, 2016).

The interviews that were conducted in this study were audio-recorded and, except for the first interview, were personally transcribed . The first interview was transcribed using software sourced from the internet. The software struggled to pick up black African accents and it took an inordinate amount of time to correct the errors. As a result, I decided to personally transcribe the interviews. According to Smith (2016), transcription is an analytical process that enables researchers to familiarize themselves with the data collected. Nonverbal utterances such as long pauses and laughter were included in the transcript. Uhm was only included in the transcript if it indicated that the person was hesitating (Esin et al., 2014). During transcription, I made notes regarding dominant themes that were coming up in the personal stories of research participants. I further made notes on theoretical perspectives that were being supported or refuted, similarities and differences between stories of research participants and any interesting insights (Crossley, 2011; Fraser, 2011; Smith, 2016).

The second step that I undertook was to generate themes from the data collected. To answer the first research question on how the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working class differed from those of black Africans raised middle class, I used the conceptual framework provided by Stephens et al. (2014). This framework explains how sociocultural contexts influence normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour (Stephens et al., 2014). Fraser (2010) and Smith, (2016) recommend that when researchers are analyzing data, they should not focus on line-by-line analysis but they should look for chunks of data that represent stories. Data was broken into

stories and these stories were placed under the selves and patterns of behaviour identified by Stephens et al. (2014) in figure 1. These theoretically-driven themes were captured in Microsoft Excel. Some of the notes made during transcriptions or analyses were also recorded in Microsoft Excel.

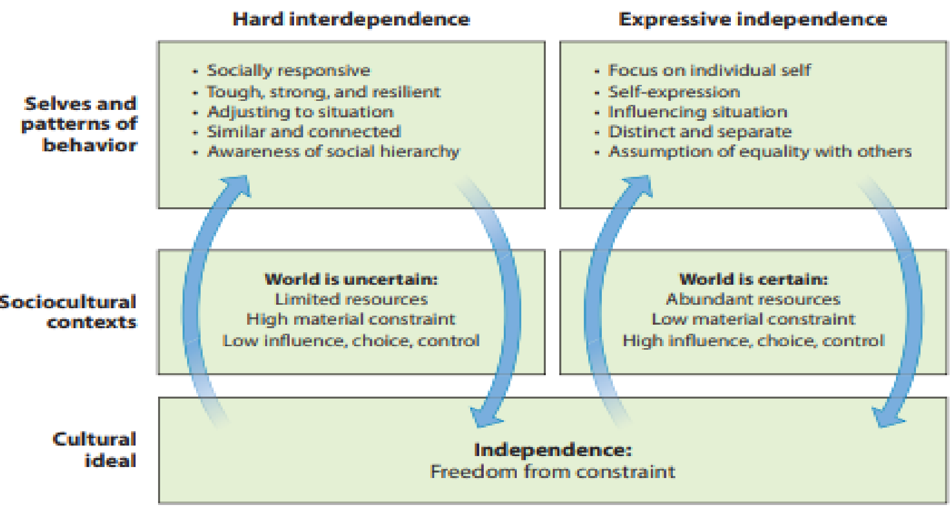

Figure 1: (Stephens et al. , 2014, p.614)

The interview questions in this study were formulated in such a way that they elicited information about the hierarchies prevalent in a gateway context, the evaluation standards that gatekeepers used in that context to separate good and bad participants, how gatekeepers maintained their dominance in the context and the strategies that research participants mentioned that they used to advance or maintain their position (Collier & Morgan, 2007; Lareau & Weininger, 2003). This information was also captured in Microsoft Excel. The focus of the analysis was on surface content that explained what happened, who was involved and how the issue was resolved (Earthy & Cronin, 2008; Gilbert, 2007). The purpose of this stage was to categorize the stories of research participants to identify similarities and differences (Earthy & Cronin, 2008).

The third step undertaken during the analysis process was to identify stories that were culturally bound and that used cultural repertoires that were familiar (Esin et al., 2014). For example, some participants used the narratives surrounding job hopping, education being an avenue of upward mobility or narratives about knowledge workers. This process also entailed looking out for references that research participants made to cultural artefacts such as books or newspapers when justifying their opinions (Fraser, 2010). Furthermore, I paid attention to stories that people told about how things had changed in their neighbourhoods, school contexts, work contexts or social class contexts (Riessman & Quinney, 2005; Smith, 2016). Some participants also used imageries to explain concepts (Fraser, 2010; Riessman & Quinney, 2005; Smith, 2016). For example, one participant compared the workplace to a gauntlet match and the word dangerous appeared in most of her answers that were related to the workplace. Another participant used the metaphor of space in most of her answers and she indicated that her viewpoint was inspired by the work of the sociologist, Professor Elijah Anderson.

The last step of the analysis was to focus on the interactional aspects of the stories (Fraser, 2010; Riessman & Quinney, 2005; Smith, 2016). When conducting this step of the analysis, the focus was on identifying viewpoints that research participants indicated were given prominence in a context and those that were silenced (Earthy & Cronin, 2008). During this process of analysis, I focused on understanding whether a research participant was telling a story as someone who was at the top or bottom of a social hierarchy (Esin et al., 2020). In this stage of the analysis, I also paid attention to questions that research participants felt comfortable and uncomfortable answering.

When research participants felt comfortable they provided long answers to questions posed and shorter answers to questions that they were not comfortable with. This was most noticeable in shorter interviews and it became easy to identify themes that different research participants were most uncomfortable talking about. These included broken families, financial struggles, attending less prestigious universities and occupations of parents who were in unskilled occupations. For some research participants, these struggles were a testament to their resilience and they openly told their stories whilst other participants did not volunteer information about their struggles and they had to be probed. I further made notes regarding the interview dynamics between myself and the research participants that I had interviewed (Esin et al., 2020; Smith, 2016). Some of these insights are shared in the autobiographical reflections section in the last chapter.

5.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

According to Guthrie (2010), ethics are professional codes of conduct that researchers adhere to, to ensure that they act with integrity and do not harm research participants. Tracy (2010) states that researchers need to meet procedural, relational, situational and exiting ethics. To meet the requirements of procedural ethics, I sought and received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria to conduct this study (Dawson, 2002). This approval can be found in Appendix three. Data was only collected after this ethical clearance had been obtained. (Dawson, 2002).

Research participants were informed that participation in this study was voluntary and that they had a right to withdraw from the research process at any point and to refuse to answer any questions that made them uncomfortable (Guthrie, 2010; Oliver, 2013). Furthermore,

research participants were informed that their answers would be treated as confidential and that the data being collected was for research purposes (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Dawson, 2002; Urquhart, 2017). This information was shared verbally before interviews were conducted and participants were also asked to sign a consent form that provided the same information (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Dawson, 2002; Urquhart, 2017). This form can be found in Appendix two. Research participants were treated with dignity and respect during the interview and the requests of participants were also taken into account (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Dawson, 2002; Urquhart, 2017). For example, I agreed that one participant could sign his consent form anonymous because he was concerned about his privacy.

Pseudonyms were used in this study to protect the identity of research participants (Oliver, 2013). The pseudonyms selected reflected the gender and ethnicity of the research participants (Oliver, 2013). Information regarding institutions, names of residential areas, occupations of research participants and professional designations were removed to minimize research participants being identifiable (Oliver, 2013). Furthermore, research results were written with care to honour those who agreed to participate in this research process (Guthrie, 2010).

5.8. QUALITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative researchers do not agree on the criteria that should be used to evaluate the quality of qualitative studies with some qualitative researchers even going as far as to argue that there should be no criteria at all (Long & Godfrey, 2002; Mays & Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010). According to Ojermack (2007), one of the challenges that narrative research faces is that it is often evaluated as not meeting rigorous standards of validity and reliability. Narrative

researchers acknowledge that the stories told by research participants are co-created with the researcher and different researchers have the potential to elicit different stories (Kraus, 2005; Staller, 2012). Research participants also bring into an interview setting an overarching personal narrative that is aligned with how they want to be perceived by others (Riessman and Quinney, 2005; Smith, 2016). Furthermore, the stories told to researchers are also temporal and they can change as participants are exposed to new information (Smith, 2016). Riessman and Quinney (2005) also argue that the stories told by research participants are not an accurate representation of the past but they allow participants to reimagine their past, present and future. Hence, it can sometimes be challenging to replicate the results of studies that have employed the narrative research method (Ojermack, 2007).

Tracy (2010) argues that research findings of qualitative research must be credible. The credibility of a study is assessed based on whether the results of the study are plausible, trustworthy and have a feel of being true. According to Ojermack (2007), the methodological validity of narrative research increases when personal stories are placed in a context. Tracy (2010) further indicates that qualitative researchers have to provide thick descriptions that provide detailed information about a context and the cultural narratives that are deployed in that context to make personal meanings. Contextual descriptions of different geographical, home and school settings were provided to enable other scholars to appraise which contexts the results of this study can be applied to (Mays & Pope, 2000; Robinson, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Walsh & Downe, 2006). The stories of research participants were also linked to cultural narratives (for example, the importance of education in facilitating upward mobility), interpersonal aspects (the type of relationship they had with gatekeepers) and the personal worlds of research participants (their exposure to different gateway contexts) (Long & Godfrey, 2002; Tracy, 2010).

The credibility of qualitative research is further established by multiple voices and opinions being presented in a research report (Mays & Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010). Research participants in the current study provided diverse viewpoints as they were exposed to different social classes, schools, work and geographical contexts (Mays & Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010). These conflicting views were discussed in the study and I made a concerted effort to ensure that there was a balanced representation of the voices of research participants (Mays & Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010). Credibility was also achieved by using multiple quotations to corroborate the perceptions of research participants and the interpretations of the stories collected were also linked to the work of other scholars (Long & Godfrey, 2002; Mays & Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010).

Tracy (2010) further states that the quality of qualitative research can be evaluated based on its rigour or dependability. In this study, information was provided regarding different aspects of the research so to enable other researchers to assess if the research processes were rigorous and systematic (Tracy, 2010; Walsh & Downe, 2006). I also offered explanations where applicable on how the different parts of the study such as the aims of the research, the theoretical framework underpinning the study and the different aspects of the research methodology were linked to each other (Long & Godfrey, 2002; Mays & Pope, 2000; Tracy, 2010). Furthermore, I provided information on how research participants were sourced and how data was collected and analysed (Long & Godfrey, 2002; Mays & Pope, 2000). I have also kept interview recordings, transcripts and the Excel spreadsheets that were used for analysis to enable other researchers who want to audit the research process to be able to do so (Long & Godfrey, 2002).

Tracy (2010) states that the quality of qualitative research can also be judged by how honest, transperant and genuine a researcher is. According to Tracy (2010), this sincerity can be achieved through a researcher being honest about personal biases, goals and mistakes that affected the research process. The last chapter in this study provides autobiographical reflections to demonstrate how my personal biases could have influenced the research process and the limitations of the current study were also acknowledged in this chapter (Tracy, 2010; Walsh & Downe, 2006).

5.9. CONCLUSION

The focus of this study was to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations using a Bourdieusian Approach. This chapter explained the sequence of steps that were undertaken as part of the research process so to answer key research questions (Mauch & Park, 2003). The research approach used in this study was qualitative research utilizing an interpretivist lens (Krauss, 2005; Staller, 2012; Willis, 2012). Data was collected through life history interviews and the sample included twenty (20) black Africans in middle-class occupations . The interviews were analysed through narrative analysis.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH FINDINGS: HOME CONTEXT

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. This chapter will address the first research question: What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school? Specifically, the chapter will discuss the normative culture-specific selves acquired in the home context. The next chapter will address normative culture-specific selves acquired in the school context.

Stephens et al. (2014) state that normative culture-specific selves promoted in different social class contexts cannot be divorced from the national context. During the process of conducting this research, it became clear that participants who grew up in urban townships, former homelands and suburbs were providing different answers on the normative culture-specific selves that were socialized in these contexts. Hence, the results in this chapter are divided into these three geographical contexts. Bold italics are used to reflect comments that I added in the quotations of research participants.

6.2.GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

6.2.1. Homelands: Villages and Rural Townships

6.2.1.1. Sociocultural context

Homelands were areas that were created by the apartheid government to separate black Africans into different ethnic groups (Geldenhuys, 1981; Heffernan, 2017). These homelands were divided into rural villages where families of migrant workers and people who were forcibly removed from urban areas lived, industrial villages (townships) that housed industrial workers and officials who administrated the homeland system and peri-urban villages that accommodated farm workers (Evans,2012). A majority of participants in this study grew up in rural villages and rural townships. Only one participant Relebogile (working-class) mentioned that she lived in an area that was close to farms. Research participants who grew up in rural villages described these contexts as pastoral areas that had limited conveniences associated with modern life:

> Most of the people lived in mud houses, thatched roofed. There were a few houses that were roofed with zinc. And most of the families had kept their cattle and goats. They had a field where they ploughed and basically a very rural environment. People provided for themselves in terms of food and maize. We were not buying anything. Everything was produced at home. The nearest surrounding areas were farms. We were between a small town and farms. Most people used to work at the farms. We could simply walk to work (Relebogile, working-class).

> I grew up in a small German missionary set-up. It was a rural village close to a small town. The town was about 5 kilometres from the village. There was also a bigger town where we would go once a month or twice a month to do proper shopping which was about 35 kilometres away. It was a village where we fetched water from the river. We got electricity only in 1999 when I was in my second year ***(at university)***. Your typical

> villages where you would wake up early to start fire. And boil water to bathe before going to school. We would boil it outside. Your typical rural village where people would mostly use candles, paraffin lamps and paraffin stoves. Using those heavy metal irons. It was that kind of thing. It didn't have the worst infrastructure. We were not far from the main road. There was reliable public transport to town. But your basic amenities that people are used to now. It took a while for us to get them. Things like piped water, water flowing from taps and electricity (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

> I grew up in a rural village in the Eastern Cape. There is no immediate water and we only had electricity about 10 years ago. It's one of those remote villages… The fact is that we did not have access to anything. Even now, you are lucky to have network. Even from the village to town, it takes about an hour on some gravel road. And you also don't have access to ***(interrupts self),*** the closest clinic is two hours away. And because we didn't have access to electricity, people didn't have as much access to TV. So whatever was on TV or people knew outside of the village, it would take someone going out of the village and coming back to share for us to know certain things (Noxolo, working-class).

Approximately eighty per cent (80%) of black Africans who lived in rural villages during the apartheid era had incomes that were below the minimum living level (Thompson, 2001). Rural areas continue in post-apartheid South Africa to have the highest levels of poverty in the country (World Bank, 2018). Some of the participants in this study grew up in families that had material conditions that aligned to material constraints experienced by most people in this geographical setting:

> My parents died very early and I was raised by my aunt with everyone in the family just lending a hand. Sometimes when I was in primary school, I had to provide for my school uniform. Sometimes during school holidays, I would join the women working on farms. My father passed on after my mother and the situation was even worse. Where I knew if other kids were going on school holidays, I would go to work on the farms. So that I could get money to buy school uniform. So I could look like other kids when the schools open. It was a painful experience (Relebogile, working-class).

> I usually tell a story in my foundation of how shoes can take me to good places. The day my mom died, my mom died when I was about to start Grade 1. I did not have shoes. Up

> to that Grade when I was going to high school, Grade 11 or 12. That is when I started having shoes because I had met my dad. (Mokgadi, working-class).

Although rural villages were predominately populated by impoverished people, there were research participants who indicated that they experienced low material constraints when growing up. These research participants were raised by parents who were part of the black African middle class :

> Until 8 years, I lived in a rural village. It was a village where we had electricity, three-bedroom en suite vibes you know….Strange, it's not like it was ***(we moved to the suburbs for)*** water and electricity. We have always had. It was not as privileged as you think you know; we have always had an OK life in the village (Thato, middle-class).

> It was a new development village back in the 90s. So it was mostly people who were born in villages around who lived in that area. Mostly young professionals. We started having electricity in this area after the mid-90s (Katlego, middle-class)

Research participants who grew up in this context indicated that the material conditions of a family were not always linked to accepted socio-economic indicators such as education, income and occupations. Some families could sustain themselves through farming or other activities. Other research participants further indicated that even though they were better educated and objectively earned more than their parents or guardians, their caregivers could achieve more with less money because their standard of living was lower:

> You see, when we talk about socio-economic status, the general aspect that we would look into is, if someone has got a job. Then the level of the job and what does it do to someone's life. That is accepted as defining socio-economic status. But there is another way of looking at socio-economic status. That has nothing to do with what a job can actually do for someone. So I think when I really look into that aspect. I think it is possible for someone to achieve a higher socioeconomic status without necessarily bringing issues of having a job or doing. Rather than looking at other ways of self-sustenance. When looking into my family where I spent the first years of my life. There

> was a level of trying to define socio-economic status in a much more liberating manner. You know, trying to go out there and do business (Mpho, middle-class).

> If I compare how I am living now, compared to them ***(my parents).*** I have not matched their socio-economic status. And one of the differences is that the standard of living was relatively lower in those days. Growing up in a rural area, there was no high maintenance for the rates, municipalities and all. I think our parents did not have the burden of municipality rates. That we have in the current setting that we are living in (Phetogo, middle-class).

> If we were living in rural township A, I would say I had surpassed their lifestyle. I am in the city and things have changed. I still think that I have surpassed their lifestyle. They lived in an era where things were still down there. Things were also much cheaper and accessible. Now it is a little difficult to attain certain things. If I had to compare my life to theirs, I don't think I am doing any better. I don't know if you understand where I am coming from (Khensani, middle-class).

Rural townships were better-serviced areas in homelands that over time became segregated by social class (Bank, 1988; Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). Development Corporations that were in existence in different homelands offered housing loans to black Africans in middle-class occupations (Bank, 1988; Pickles & Woods, 1992; Southall, 1977). These black Africans could build or buy modern houses. Phetogo (middle-class) who grew up in both a rural village and township juxtaposes the areas as follows:

> I grew up in varying neighbourhoods. Initially, I was in a township settlement. They used to call it the old location. And then we moved to a rural setting when I was 7. Rural and stricken by poverty also. The differences I could pick up were that in the township it was more working-class families ***(black African middle-class).*** There were families in terms of the traditional sense. Both parents will be working and staying with the children. It was a complete household in the traditional sense. Whereas in the rural setting it was quite different. The difference was that only the moms or the mothers in the family were at home. The fathers were mostly migrant workers in Gauteng or the mines. It was a rural area predominated with working, not working but lower-working class. And because of the lower working class, you could also see poverty first-hand. It was a very low-serviced

> area. No water, free-flowing water at taps. There were no flushing toilets. To get water we had to go to the river with drums. I remember there was one tap catering for the village. It was not always flowing with water. It was not always reliable with water. So that is another difference that I experienced growing up in a rural setting. There were no services as compared to the township (Phetogo, middle-class).

Although rural townships were better serviced than rural villages, both areas had limited infrastructure and a shortage of recreational facilities (World Bank 2018):

> ***(Disadvantages)*** Lack of development facilities. Cause we only had the sports ground area as the area of development in the rural area (Phetogo, middle-class).
>
> The disadvantages were that we had sporting facilities but there were sort of abandoned. We didn't have parks to play at. We were robbed of some sense of appreciating that side of community life and enjoying community spaces as well (Lethabo, middle-class).
>
> Lack of opportunities to learn skills outside of sports. Outside like the typical sport which is soccer. So, not having recreational areas and opportunities to learn other activities such as playing music instruments. The limitation had to do with the lack of recreational facilities (Katlego, middle-class).

Some participants in this study also argued that homelands were areas that offered the least opportunities for upward social mobility. This assertion is corroborated by a study that was conducted by the World Bank (2018) that shows that former homelands still accommodate a majority of poor people in post-apartheid South Africa and these areas are not well-integrated into the South African economy. There were also research participants who indicated that they were perceived as less sophisticated because they grew up in rural areas or who felt that rural areas did not equip them with normative culture-specific selves valued in urban workplaces:

> Those are the disadvantages of growing up in rural areas. When you reach where you are going. You find those who grew up in urban areas. You have to compete with them even whites as well. They had all the resources that they were having. For you grew up, ***(interrupts self)*** even in my work. I started working in a rural setting. I never had

someone who had an urban area lens or a white area lens. When I go to work now, I am expected to compete with these people. I am expected to even lead and manage these people (Mokgadi, working-class).

If I had grown up in a township in an urban area like Mamelodi, Atteridgeville or SOWETO, I do believe that things were already a step ahead. I mention the townships in Gauteng. I do believe by then things were already a step ahead. There was technology that people in those townships would have been exposed to and just the general feeling that those townships were closer to major cities…. You look at it from a technological perspective. Even the social advantages. Being able to speak English adequately, you know. Not necessarily academic English but the level of English that is relevant to socialize adequately (Mpho, middle-class).

I remember when I joined international company A. When I compared myself to my peers who came from major cities. They were not intimidated by anything. They were not timid. They got promoted quicker than I was. I was a typical village girl. I know I went to a historically white university but the village girl was still in me. That African thing of respecting the elders and not coming across as assertive enough. I watched my colleagues, whom we joined together, climbing and accelerating much quicker than me. And it is stuff that they were exposed to. Not only from tertiary but high school as well which I didn't (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

The disadvantages would be that you come to the city and you grow up. You are not familiar with the life that is here. Maybe in the workplace or even at university, people ask you where you are from and you say I am from rural village A. Depending on which school you went to, you are sort of judged based on that. They say you don't know much. You get to the workplace; it is still the same thing. I can't help where I was brought up. Irrespective of the fact that I am here today, when you tell people I went to a primary ***(school)*** in a rural village or township, you are looked at differently from someone who would say I went to Pretoria Girls. The disadvantage is mostly an external thing. People perceive you or look at you as less than they are or less than others, who were born, bred and raised in an environment that is different from yours (Khensani, middle-class).

6.2.1.2. Hierachies in the context

All the research participants who grew up in the homeland context unanimously agreed that the power structure between adults and children was explicit. Adults were authority figures that monitored the behaviour of children and they could discipline any child in the environment. Accordingly, adults had to be given the utmost respect and obeyed without questioning:

> Respecting the elders meant doing whatever the elder wanted you to do. If they send you to the shops, you go without questioning. It also meant with the parents, not answering back. Following rules. When they say don't steal, you don't steal. When you are known as a child who steals, it was considered to be a bad thing. Even the smallest things. If you were given R5 to go and buy bread and you used the change to buy something else. The shop owner would tell on you. That will be considered serious to the shop owner as this child is starting to steal change so it is going to get worse. So, they will report on things like that. Overall, respect also meant being aware that you are being watched everywhere. So you had to make sure that when it comes to elders greet them and do what they say (Katlego, middle-class).

> It was someone ***(a good child)*** who behaves and behaviour was defined in a very restricted way, respecting the adults. But not only the adults in the family but adults on the street and in the community. Respect was seen as not doing something wrong in front of someone who was elderly. If an elderly person hears you using swear words. They will report you at home that you were disrespectful using swear words on the street. At home, it will mean taking instructions from whoever was an elder in the family (Phetogo, middle-class).

Hierarchies in some settings in the homeland context were arranged according to religious affiliation. There were participants in this study who categorized the rural villages that they grew up in as Christian or non-Christian environments. Most Christian areas had schools and this played a key role in enabling some research participants to acquire formal education.

Being affiliated with some denominations also increased chances of social mobility as these denominations offered bursaries:

> MM: I grew up in an area that was a chieftaincy homestead. The area was divided into small villages. When I describe the village that I grew up in, I say it is the village immediately after the chief's kraal. Within there are so many pockets. But my place was nested in. It was a very diverse village. Culturally wise, it was a diverse village. People who know my village know that it was a place where Christians and non-Christians could live together. That is what Professor Eskia Mphahlele explains about his village. The chief allowed people to practice their cultural beliefs and allowed others to practice Christianity. For me, I lived in one of those villages that were rooted in cultural practices. However that said, it did not exclude those who were not rooted in cultural practices. When I talk about cultural practices, I mean issues such as initiation which predominately identified those two types of cultures that I am talking about.
>
> LM: What were the advantages of growing up where you grew up?
>
> MM: The advantage is. One of the things that I like up to today is that there was a school. In other places, those who wanted to go to school will come to our place to go to school. Other places adjacent to us did not have a school. It was a community school started by a group of men who were coming back from World War II. So when they came back, they came back with that notion of establishing a primary school there. The other places around us did not have schools. There were churches also. That was an advantage for me because I could decide to follow any religion besides what was practised in the house.
>
> LM: Were there specific advantages to being a member of a church in comparison to practising your traditional beliefs? Did you get any advantages from being, for example, part of the Catholic Church?
>
> MM: No, I didn't. Unfortunately, I was an orphan at an early age. My aunt took me in and she was married to people who were Catholic. And I think the thing that you are saying was the very thing that made her join them. She was a non-Christian. She wasn't going to any church. She encouraged me to join the Catholic Church during that time because there were bursaries and the like. And because again I think she identified literacy from me from a very young age. So my mom was a Methodist but she encouraged me to join the Catholic Church. Based on the fact that she was married into a Catholic family. Also based on the fact that there were advantages to being part of the church. Some of them made it through the church during that time. But it never worked for me.
>
> (Mokgadi, working-class).

> If I recall in the old location we did not have preschools or crèches. The only preschools or crèches were within the Catholic church. It was only restricted to the kids whose parents were going to the Catholic church. So it was disadvantaging to see them all going to creche and we were just playing in the streets. Though it was nice. We could see that they were getting more or enjoying ***(pauses).*** They were enjoying the privilege of being nurtured through development whilst we were busy outside (Phetogo, middle-class).

6.2.1.3. Normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns

Hauser and Norton (2017) argue that most people are not aware of societal inequality in their countries and only those who are exposed to inequality have more accurate perceptions of how systems benefit and disadvantage others. Piff et al. (2018) further state that people who are not aware of the extent of societal inequality tend to ignore the role of structural barriers in facilitating or hindering social mobility. These individuals believe that personal factors such as hard work and talent are the main determinants of upward social mobility (Piff et al., 2018). Growing up in homelands exposed some research participants in this study to societal inequalities and this engendered in them a viewpoint that not all people have equal opportunities:

> The advantage is that you realize that life is not homogeneous. You will not have a society where you can call yourself as all equal. You can see just with the poverty in the rural areas and the experiences that we had. One more thing that is still stuck in my mind is that there was no access to emergency services for health provision. If someone was sick in the family or highly expectant and they needed to be taken to hospital, it was the vans or vehicles in the villages that would do that work. Whereas in the old location we had easy access to ambulances. That sad background or growing up in such distinct backgrounds, always informed me that life or societies are built on different experiences. The context that I am talking about is within the black ***(African)*** society. So at that time, we also had issues with racial settlements. The whites were staying in town and we could see they were having a better life. If I compare the township life and the whites who were staying in town. The township life was relatively worse when compared to those staying in town. So there was a consciousness that wherever we lived whether it is in a town or rural area, there is no uniform style of living. We differed (Phetogo, middle-class).

> I now struggle to connect with my childhood friends. Because there is this huge gap between us. We grew up together but as life progressed we took different paths. Maybe they didn't get the chance to go to varsity. Or exposure to other things that might land them a decent job. A lack of access to opportunities has caused a major drift and I can't even have a simple conversation with my childhood friends. They are frustrated and annoyed and I understand where they are coming from. They didn't have opportunities. There wasn't a difference between me and my neighbour, she was equally as bright as me, but she was in a local high school. She never got the chance to complete tertiary education or do something decent to ensure she can sustain herself and I think that's the downside (Lethabo, middle-class).

> That environment made me focus. Unfortunately, like I said when situations are harsh, for some it becomes difficult to get out because you would go to school without a lunch box. You did not even know what a lunch box was. You would eat leftover porridge in the morning, that's it. You would then come back and eat in the afternoon. So, it caused a few people to drop out. Thank God, I held on (Relebogile, working-class).

> For me it was you can achieve what you set your mind to. I know I speak from a point of privilege. It is not always about wanting or not wanting to achieve. There has to be luck and there has to be a lot of things that can attribute to someone succeeding (Noxolo, working-class).

Hauser and Norton (2017) further state that high economic inequality dampens the aspirations of young people as they start to believe that upward mobility is not possible for them. Mobility beliefs are important as individuals invest their resources in social mobility when they have expectations that their actions will result in upward mobility (Piff et al., 2018). Some participants concurred with this argument and stated that homeland contexts limited what young people thought was possible, likely and reasonable for them (Maton, 2008). As a consequence, the limitations in the external environment were sometimes internalized and this influenced the choices that people made about their future:

> We had no role models. Particularly people that we could look up to. Those that would make us motivated to want to follow in their footsteps. A beacon that you can look at, oh it is possible for me to also be this way. The entire environment was bleak. There were

not many rich people. We were not even seeing much that we were poor because the gap was not wide. That was a disadvantage because you did not have anything to look up to. There was nothing that inspired you. You know when you have role models sometimes you get inspired. That was a disadvantage. The area was so backward. Even though it was close to town, it was so dull. Nothing motivating. The only thing you could do as a girl to make your life better was to get married. Those were the things when I was growing up, girls were aspiring to. The lack of role models was a big disadvantage (Relebogile, working-class).

The biggest disadvantage is that we were not exposed to much. To what is really possible. We were limited in imagining our lives outside of the village. I think that was the one disadvantage of growing up where I did. We were not exposed to what was out there. Our imagination and outlook. We had limited access to TV. Our TVs operated using a car battery. Which sometimes would finish and it takes a while to go to the small business centre to recharge it. We felt it when we got to tertiary and we felt it when we started working. We were starting on a back foot when compared to people who were coming from cities or well-established schools. They were coming in with an attitude that I belong here and that I can do anything. We didn't really have that. Because a lot of things in the city intimidated us. It took us a while to acclimatize. It took us a while (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

In high school when I took physical science and I told my friends at home because I went to a boarding school. They were asking me what are you doing ? Nobody does that. Physics is hard, are you crazy? I constantly had to counter that eKasi ***(township)*** mentality because they don't know better. They have not seen better to be able to say this is doable and this is possible. So there were certain instances where I had to say whatever and counter it based on my home countering that you are doing this and this is the way to go. My family background constantly helped in countering that pushback. When you are doing something that is considered normal outside the township and in the township; people think you are wasting your time. They have to constantly rope you into their limitations. You can't even share your biggest dreams because you know the kinds of people you are dealing with. You can't wear your heart on your sleeve, knowing the type of people you are dealing with and knowing why they are the way they are (Lethabo, middle-class).

However, Bray et al. (2010) state that in South Africa there is a dominant cultural narrative that education is a gateway that enables all people, irrespective of their social backgrounds, to experience upward mobility. Research participants in this study indicated that the adults in their lives used this narrative to communicate that they could influence their future despite their backgrounds. The quest to attain education, even in interdependent contexts, was seen as requiring individual effort. Bray et al. (2010) argue that this narrative ignores that South Africa has a dual education system that offers different outcomes and failure to attain coveted educational qualifications is shifted to individuals who are seen as not having tried hard enough:

> The harsh environment made me say if it is true what my aunts are telling me, that it is only education that can take you out of this misery. I would rather focus on it. Because I knew what poverty was, I experienced it and I did not want to live that life. My aunt told me that there is no orphan. Education will take you out of a situation where you are called an orphan. Being an orphan is a choice. If you do not become educated, you will remain an orphan. Focus on your education and your life will change (Relebogile, working-class).

> The people who were raising us, they wanted us to be better. They wanted us to have opportunities. There was a buzzword, there has always been a buzzword of people must get an education, people must be able to look for opportunities outside of the small village....It has always been that you have to want it ***(education)*** for yourself more than someone wants it for you. That has always been the thing. Education will work but you must want to achieve. You have to want to be better. Even if the people around you can want it ***(education)*** for you, if you don't want it, you won't have it (Noxolo, working-class).

> You know being from a village, there are a lot of uneducated people. Some of them just didn't have the opportunity to study and some of them just didn't care. The mentality in the villages was that we would never amount to anything. I don't know what they were thinking. But some people would say what can a person from village A amount to ? Or nobody has ever gone to school so why is it important ? With my parents in particular, where we lived there were a lot of older people. My parents grew up in a village just next

> to where we were and we moved to the township, that is where the school was. So in the township, I would still call it a village, my neighbours the one's surrounding us were people older than my parents. So my parents were the younger parents there. So, out of all of them, they were the more educated ones. Because of where we were. Because of where they came from. They could see their surroundings. People don't basically do anything. My father was a plumber, someone who went to school for it. Being an agricultural technician for my mother, they sort of understood the value of education. They pushed us in that sense. You need to study. You need to be the best and they were strict (Khensani, middle-class).

Homeland contexts were further experienced as physically safe areas that inculcated a sense of community and also stimulated feelings of belonging. These areas had community members who perceived that they were interdependent. Thus, physical safety in this context was not achieved by having the level of economic capital that allowed one to live in a safer neighbourhood (Piff et al., 2012). Only Thami (middle-class) experienced the context that he grew up in as unpredictable and dangerous:

> Similarities ***(between rural townships and villages)*** were the ease of communal living. There were no boundaries in terms of our neighbours. We knew our neighbours. We could play across ***(interrupts self).*** Let's say in the old location, we almost knew one another in the area. And there were no restrictions in terms of you are staying in this street, then you cannot go to the other street. There was peace in the area. Similarly, in the rural setting it was easy to relate. Very communal (Phetogo, middle-class).
>
> Being able to understand that as a child and a community member, I have to assist in the community. …. Let's say they are going to have a community meeting under a tree, you have to go there as kids to assist with clearing weeds from the area. And to ensure that the place is set up for the meeting (Katlego, middle-class).
>
> It was a sense of belonging…. There were families who did not have maize meal for the month. They will go to this family today and to this other family tomorrow. When they get maize meal, they will send it again. If I don't have shoe polish. I remember, I never had shoe polish. I would get a container once a year during December. During the year, I will be going to other families to do my shoes. Once over the weekend, the rest of the

week, I will just brush my shoes. Someone will buy sugar and someone will borrow it. That is how we lived (Mokgadi, working-class).

> LM: What were disadvantages of growing up in the village?
> TM: It was poverty and lack of education of my grandparents. High rates of alcoholism and high rates of violence.
> (Thami, middle-class).

Scholars argue that individuals who have lives that are characterized by material scarcity are likely to be socially responsive when compared to those who live lives that are characterized by material abundance (Kraus et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2010). Prosociality in contexts where resources are scarce is hypothesized to be a survival mechanism that ensures that other people will be available when a person is facing threatening situations (Kraus et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2010). There were participants in this study who did not grow up in homes that were characterized by material scarcity but who indicated that they were socialized by their families to care for others. They observed their parents responding to the needs of those who were economically struggling in their communities:

> The advantage is that I was not shielded from what life meant for other people, the hardships. I remember my family could not throw away leftover food; we used to pack it aside for another family. Even our clothes, we used to give to another family. My family was also very ***(interrupts self)*** I wouldn't understand when my family would say no to getting me extra toys whereas they are trying to save enough money so that my neighbour can register at varsity. It gave me a sense of that (***interrupts self)***. You would think someone who went to a Model C primary or private school would have a different experience but I had the best of both worlds. I saw what life was like for my friends and their families. That also shaped my heart into caring for other people. Being sensitive to other people's backgrounds and their needs. And those kind of things (Lethabo, middle-class).

> Also, you will remember in the 90s and early 2000s, a lot of people's parents passed on from HIV/AIDS. A lot of homes in the village were left headed by children because most parents had died. So, my dad at the time had a small shop that he ran for the people

> around the village. So, it was natural for people to gravitate toward the shop during the day. There were a lot of people who would come around the shop to offer themselves. My mom would always cook for all of us. And my dad encouraged most of them to complete matric and taught some of them to drive so they had licenses and matric. Some pursued careers in the Army and police. But at any moment in our household, there were so many kids. Around twenty of us and at night they would go back and sleep in their homes. The following morning they would come. So I grew up around a lot of people. I have siblings and I also have non-biological siblings. There were a lot of us (Noxolo, working-class).

Studies further indicate that individuals who grow up in homes that have scarce material resources are likely to be strong, tough and resilient (Piff et al., 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). Research participants in this study who grew up in home contexts characterized by material scarcity indicated that this shaped them toward normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns that are illustrative of being hard:

> There was nothing impossible for them. We would wake up in the morning with nothing. At the end of the day, there would be something on the table. So hope was very important for us. Despite the problems that we had, the resilient part of it was one of the things that was very important (Mokgadi, working-class).

> In every family, a good child must be obedient, work very hard, go out in the morning and pick firewood. You must always ensure that there is firewood at home. You must not be lazy. A girl must always work. You must go fetch water in the morning. We did not have tap water. As a girl, you must ensure that there is enough water for bathing, cooking and for doing laundry. Those were the chores of a girl who listened to her parents. The routines of a girl who listened. The routines of a girl who was well brought up. This was the conduct of a good girl who listened to her parents (Relebogile, working-class).

Some participants in this study who were raised middle-class also contrasted the living experiences of those growing up in homes that are characterized by material abundance versus material scarcity. These participants stated that children who grew up in homes that are characterized by scarcity were more aware of material constraints in the home and they took on adult responsibilities from a young age:

I was not a good child in North West. A good child can clean the house and that is the last thing that I had on my mind because back in suburb A my family was very much into academics, study hard. Get through school, concentrate on the books, concentrate on sports. So it was all about, you know, my school education and what that it offered me and in North West it was different. If you are a young lady, you already having the responsibility to go fetch water. Clean the house and making sure that younger kids are looked after. So that wasn't my space (Banthatile, middle-class).

TK: What were the disadvantages of growing up where you grew up?
LM: For us, I think because we lost my Dad the same year we moved to town, the adjustment. That adjusting from two parents to one was a bit difficult. Now you started seeing the cracks. You are like cool because, over the time they were building our main house. Now you see the struggles, you see that rent is actually due. We didn't know rent things until my Dad died. That is the only thing, once my Dad died.
LM: Sorry about that, so it was more of a lifestyle change?
TK: Yes, it was more you start seeing what adults do. You now have the rent guy coming in and saying, you are behind on rent. The one car is sold. Now you are dealing with grief. The Psychologist in the mix. That is when life changed when my Dad died.
(Thato, middle-class).

6.2.2. Urban Township and Inner Cities

6.2.2.1.Historical hierarchies

Urban townships are areas that were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s by the National Party government to accommodate black Africans who were working in major cities (Wale, 2013; World Bank, 2018). After 1965, the government stopped building new townships and started shifting funds allocated for public investments from urban townships to homelands (Wale, 2013). Accommodation became scarce in urban townships and in the late 1970s, as part of its reform programme, the National Party government started allowing private companies to build houses for black Africans (Crankshaw, 2002, Foster & Wale, 2017; Nzimande, 1991; Wale, 2013). Crankshaw (2002) states that this process introduced

residential areas in black African townships that were segregated along social class lines. The houses in new development areas were bought by black Africans who were beneficiaries of Affirmative Action measures that started taking place in the corporate sector in the 1970s (Nzimande, 1991). Government employees who had housing subsidies were also able to take advantage of these new housing opportunities (Crankshaw, 2002, Foster & Wale, 2017; Wale, 2013). According to Crankshaw (2002), the typical residents of these middle-class neighbourhoods included teachers, nurses, supervisors and personnel assistants.

The Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act of 1952 was annulled in 1986 (Foster & Wale, 2017). Although it was still illegal for South Africans to live in racially desegregated neighbourhoods, there were middle-class black Africans who moved to inner city neighbourhoods in the 1980s to be closer to work and better schools for their children (Foster & Wale, 2017). Most of these individuals lived in rented flats and they earned on average incomes that were lower than those earned by black Africans who lived in elite townships (Crankshaw, 2002). According to Crankshaw (2002), rent was cheaper in inner city areas when compared to bond repayments in new township developments. After 1994, black Africans were allowed to own houses in previously white areas (suburbs) (Foster & Wale, 2017). There was a migration of middle-class black Africans out of the townships and inner city areas to the suburbs (Donaldson et al., 2013; Foster & Wale, 2017). As a result, most inner city neighbourhoods and urban townships became populated by members of the working-class in post-apartheid South Africa (Foster & Wale, 2017).

6.2.2.2. Sociocultural context

Research participants in this study who grew up in urban townships or inner city neighbourhoods categorized these areas as chaotic, dangerous and unpredictable social environments (Stephens et al., 2014). During the apartheid era, urban townships accommodated both working-class and middle-class black Africans (Iqani, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). The economic capital of middle-class black Africans did not spare them from the chaos that was sometimes endemic in this setting (Nzimande, 1991):

> It was rough during my time. They could even rape women during the day. It was pretty rough across township A (Thabang, middle-class).

> It was harsh. You would wake up and hear that there is a dead body that was found in the field. And nobody knows what could have happened (Tinyiko, working-class).

Urban townships were also sites of political struggle and acts of political violence between the National Party government and political activists became a norm after the 1976 student uprising (Glaser, 2018; Heffernan, 2019; Wills, 2011). Racial hierarchies in urban townships were maintained through physical violence whereas in homelands racial hierarchies were symbolically maintained as there were fewer incidents of political resistance (Schubert, 2014). The excerpt from Mokgadi (working-class) demonstrates the physical absence of white people in the rural environment as well as the dominant role that they played in the social environment:

> Township A is a township and when I was growing up, it was one of the most violent places at the time because of apartheid. When I was going to school, it was very normal to wake up and see a dead body on the way to school. It was very normal for us to hear the sounds of guns. In fact, one experience was when I was in primary school. The first time I saw somebody being shot was a person who sat next to me on the desk and we were still kids at the time. So, being a township. It was a site of ***(political)*** struggle (Sipho, working-class).

> So the advantage for me was that the ***(rural)*** area was very dominated by African culture. Even though the churches were established by white people, we rarely saw them. We would see a white priest coming to the church once a year or twice. During Good Friday and in December. We would see a white farmer coming to buy pigs but we never interacted with them. We were buying locally from our local store. We didn't see the Jewish people who were owning the store around. But basically, I didn't have a clear idea until I went for professional training on how white life is. When I went to an urban area to train for my profession that is when I encountered whites. To be honest, I had never interacted with a white person whilst I was still in my village. That is the main reason that I like that place during that time (Mokgadi, working-class)

Research participants who grew up in urban townships or the inner city further indicated that these contexts had limited resources when compared to white areas or accepted universal benchmarks. However, the stories told by research participants in this context were of how these areas had declined from when they were young. Some research participants also indicated that the resources that were available in their environments when they were growing up were better than what some areas had in present-day South Africa. This was different from accounts told by research participants who grew up in homelands and who told stories of progress. In their accounts, participants who grew up in homelands indicated that they got tap water, electricity or telephones during the post-apartheid era :

> There were Nigerian books in the library. By reading, you open up your world and you say there is more out there. But then you realize why is the more not where I live? When they talk about beautiful hospitals and an ambulance that literally arrives within ten minutes and you are starting to say that, that is starting not to be my picture ***(interrupts self)*** actually one of the things I remember is that my own big sister fell pregnant in her last year in matric. She then came home. One of the things I remember from that time is that the hospital at that time when she had my niece the nurses used to come in an ambulance to bathe babies. They helped young mothers to bathe their babies….. This is the same ambulance now that people in present-day South Africa, that stay in the township where I stayed ***(interrupts self).*** My uncle still stays in the same house, it has been extended and everything with my cousins but if someone were to be stabbed in the same house, I think it would take longer for the ambulance to get there. Things have

changed. That is one of the things that I remember from my childhood (Tinyiko, working-class).

Back then it was proper, it was still clean. That was around 1996. Crime was there but it was much better than it is now. Now, it's hectic to go to town. But it was liveable. Everything was fine. Back then crime was less and you could live in a cleaner place (Lebohang, working-class).

Back then it was ***(interrupts self),*** and now it has a high crime rate. But when I was growing up we had less crime. Most of us youngsters were encouraged to attend school. Most youngsters of today do not see the need of going to school. Studying and becoming better people. Me growing up in those times, we were more focused on our school work. And there was less crime back in our times (Teboho, working-class).

LM: So, it was an under-resourced school?
SD: Not extremely, when I compare it to what I see on TV. It was under-resourced in terms of norms and standards but it was not like we had to cross a river to get there (Sipho, working-class).

6.2.2.3. Normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns

Urban townships were areas that accommodated black Africans from different ethnic groups (Foster & Wale, 2017). Residents of these areas were exposed to ethnically diverse black Africans unlike residents of homelands (Foster & Wale, 2017). Black Africans who lived in urban areas had exposure to major black African languages spoken in South Africa whereas a majority of those who grew up in homelands were exposed to the language spoken in their area. Inner city areas were likewise multiracial areas that also accommodated black people from other African countries (Foster & Wale, 2017). Mokgadi (working-class) who grew up in a rural village argued that black Africans who grew up in urban townships were well-rounded South Africans as they could speak most of the languages spoken in the country. These black Africans could also easily connect with other black Africans:

> I can speak most of the eleven languages in South Africa. The only one I can hear but cannot respond quick enough to is IsiNdebele. So you have seven children playing. Tsietsi will be speaking Sepedi, Ndivhu will be speaking Tshivenda and I will be speaking Tsonga. We are all playing and we are speaking our languages. You don't realize until later that you can understand all these languages. You start speaking and responding in Sepedi or Tshivenda….... That is an advantage, especially for a person in HR. I can switch just like that. When I am working in an industrial area having a workshop and I meet a Venda person, I can speak to them in their language. When there is a problem, I can switch to their language and understand what the issue is. Especially when you grew up in a family where respecting elders was important. That respect still comes through when you switch because it shows that you are interested in that person and what you want them to help you with (Tinyiko, working-class).

> The focal point in my life revolved around my village, BoPedi and Bapedi culture. I had never encountered any other cultural group in South Africa. A Zulu, a Xhosa, or others. I was only around my people which was a disadvantage in my life…This has impacted my life. I do not know any other language except the one that I was taught. I know English and Afrikaans. When it comes to others, I just know how to greet because I was taught that when I was doing my professional training in an urban area. I would communicate with patients in Sepedi. If they could not hear me. It was up to them. I always see that as a disadvantage (Mokgadi, working-class).

The ethnic heterogeneity of urban areas meant that people who lived in these areas did not live amongst their kin. Furthermore, urban townships and inner city neighbourhoods did not have communal moral and relational standards that most residents in these areas adhered to. Participants who grew up in the homeland context mentioned that most people in their areas either practised Christianity or adhered to the prescripts of black African cultures. The family structure in urban townships and inner city neighbourhoods was more influential in inculcating what it means to be a good and appropriate person (Stephens et al., 2014). The cultural meaning systems of what it means to be a good person varied in this environment and the communitywas not as involved in monitoring the behaviour of children as in the homeland context:

> Both my parents didn't have professions so to speak but they wanted their kids to have a decent place, by township standards, to live. They were focused, they worked hard and they went to raise bank loans for the bond in order to buy a house. That helped me as someone who was growing up that I have to work towards a goal. I have to work toward buying a decent home. I have to empower myself in such a manner that I can afford to buy a decent home and afford monthly repayments at least. That level of focus and goal orientation was important…My father was not into alcohol. He was very focused. He used to motivate us. He used to take interest in global events. That is how I got to watch what was happening out there in the world. He made sure that every day, we read a minimum of two newspapers (Sipho, working-class).

> Her being the matriarch of the family she was saying not during my watch. Our first sister, we are five girls altogether and two boys. Our first sister fell pregnant. The way she handled it was if anyone dares me again I am going to drop you at your boyfriend's place so you see what growing up is because you want to do grown-up stuff. No one dared her, not one of us. No one had a child after my sister because an example had been set. So when they say a mother, a parent who brought me up, it was our mom. She made sure that thing happen for us (Tinyiko, working-class).

The cultural narrative that education was a gateway to upward mobility was also accepted in this context. Bray et al. (2010) argue that education is not in and of itself a gateway to upward mobility, parents must know the steps that will facilitate the process of their children achieving upward mobility through education. Kim and Schneider (2005) state that these steps include parents emphasizing the importance of education to their children, helping their children to acquire the correct information and parents providing or obtaining financial assistance to help their children to get through the education system. Research participants in this context could mention the steps that their parents took so they could be educated:

> You come from a family where your mom is just trying to make it as a divorcee with seven children going back to her people. All she said was I need everyone to go to school. If I can thank that woman is for that. Mama will literally come in her overalls, she was a cleaner, and she would come in overalls and sign surety with her manager. The manager signing his house as surety at a bank so that I get a loan. And by grace, my life has been grace, mine and my sisters. And from all seven of us, only one person refused to go to

varsity but he did some courses. Everyone else went to school. The first one is a sister in a hospital, the second one is a teacher, my brother is a Marketing Specialist, my other sister is a fashion designer, my other sister is in HR. This is one thing my mother drummed into us. Education is going to get you out of this. You are not going to get out by having a gold tooth and expensive shoes. She would say I am not going to pay for a gold tooth. I don't have that money. In the environment we were growing up in, other children were telling you they have medical aid and they are putting in a gold tooth. My mother would say, we don't have medical aid. Where am I going to get medical aid? (Tinyiko, working-class).

The only thing that they ***(parents)*** took interest in was our education. For instance, when I was writing an assignment, my father would sit with me and guide me practically…. When I went to high school, my parents arranged for supplementary classes to help me with English, mathematics and whatever was required for the workplace (Sipho, working-class).

Opportunities were very limited. I was fortunate because I was living two lives. I would see what was out there in the ghettos and also see what is happening in the out there world. I was very very fortunate to attend good schools (Thabang, middle-class).

Not all adults were revered in this context and some participants were encouraged to not be similar to others in their communities. The connection between residents of urban townships and inner city areas was also tenuous when compared to that of individuals who lived in homelands. Piff et al. (2012) hypothesize that communal tendencies diminish when people live in environments that are physically threatening:

My father said your first downfall will be the abuse of alcohol. He was an activist against alcohol. We were surrounded by everyone who was into substance abuse. That was an escape mechanism for a lot of people in the township (Sipho, working-class).

The grandmother next door was the grandmother to everyone. The aunt next door was an aunt to everyone. If the aunt next door said come let me send you to the shop that is what you did. Or the aunt said come and help me clean, you would do that. At the same time, you grew up in a community where you knew you can't go and have a whole feast in

> other people's houses. Food is not enough for everyone, kind of thing. You would eat at home before you go out and play (Tinyiko, working-class).

> LM: In your family, how did they define a good child?
> TT: You don't bring problems to other people.
> LM: So you keep your problems to yourself.
> TT: Yes
> (Thabang, middle-class).

The socio-psychological perspective of social class argues that people who live in working-class environments are attuned to scanning their environment for threats as they live in contexts that are unpredictable and chaotic (Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). These individuals learn to avoid danger by being vigilant of their surroundings, aware of social hierarchies in a context, adjusting to the environment to reduce personal risks and they also learn to stand up for themselves (Manstead, 2018; Piff et al., 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). Participants in this study who were exposed to urban townships and inner city neighbourhoods called this disposition being streetwise or streetsmart:

> I had to be streetwise and always make sure that I am safe. Just always be alert. Watch around (Lebohang, working-class).

> Streetwise. I am grateful I grew up in township A. It taught me to know my place where I belong and where I don't belong. Not to get involved in stuff that has nothing to do with me…In the township when we were growing up, we knew that this one was dating a drug dealer or a gangster. So you would not waste your time to go and approach a woman like that. At the time, I was growing up the biggest gangsters were called the Hazels. You never messed with them. They were not stealing or terrorizing the township but you never messed with them. So you knew where you belong and you know where you don't belong. You knew places where you can go and places that you could not go (Thabang, middle-class).

> It also taught me to be street smart, I know when people see me they think this pretty girl can't harm a fly but if you push me hard enough I can unleash the ghetto out of me. Scare

somebody who thought they could intimidate me. Simple things like when a stranger looks you in the eye, you look them right back in the eye. It's something that you learn in the township; it is a sign of authority. I see you, you can't intimidate me. It is a sign of standing my ground and that will intimidate most people. For people who are unsuspecting of the background that you come from, you throw them off especially if they thought you were prey in downtown CBD or they think you are a toy (Lethabo, middle-class).

Living in risky areas or homes that had limited material resources required some research participants in this study to be strong, tough and resilient. Participants who grew up in the homeland context mentioned that they were always aware that adults were supervising their behaviour. In urban township and inner city contexts, the environment was unpredictable and grown-ups could also be a source of threat. Children had to learn to be responsible for themselves and the decisions that they made at a younger age. With issues such as crime or run-ins with police officers, parents had limited power to protect their children once they were in trouble. Hence, children in this context could not always be shielded from the brutality of grown-ups, financial constraints in the home or the consequences of their actions. Individuals who grew up in urban townships or inner city neighbourhoods were required to be self-sufficient so to navigate these chaotic settings :

(My family taught me) to be self-sufficient and not depend on anyone (Lebohang, working-class).

Yes, there was crime and when a family member is involved in the crime, you have some semblance of protection and the minute that person is gone you don't have. Even worse when he passes away and a year or two later my uncle passed away, his father. Now there is just us, females. I opted to go live with my mother instead of staying with my grandmother who lived closer to the school. Now, I went to town. I stayed with my grandmother sometimes. I would take my transport money and buy clothes. If I run out of money, my mother wouldn't care because she gave me transport money for the month.

> You learnt to be financially savvy at quite a young age. You knew no extras were coming (Tinyiko, working-class).

Apartheid was designed in such a way that black Africans would always assume a subordinate role in society (Molteno, 1984). During the inception of apartheid, black Africans were only allowed to study courses at the university level that would enable them to administrate the homeland system (Nkomo, 1981). The subordination of black Africans became systematic over time as black Africans could only aspire to have careers that they had information about or occupations where they had role models (Schubert, 2014): There were research participants in this study who indicated that when they were growing up they had no knowledge of available careers. Some of these participants mentioned that they were only exposed to adults who worked in black African middle-class occupations or criminals. This lack of career information was also cited by participants who grew up in homelands as a disadvantage.

> I wouldn't say there were advantages. Everything was not positive at the time. The only thing was that I may sound like a broken record. What helped some of us, what helped me ***(with emphasis)*** was the fact that the church environment used to arrange for us to get access to liberation literature. Remember our exposure to the external world was through SABC. At the time it was called TV 1, TV 2, and TV 3. That was our only exposure to the external world. We didn't know at the time you could be a doctor, a nuclear physicist, or an accountant. We just knew nurses, guys who used to drive around in Mercedes Benzes, General Practitioners. And then the guys who used to go and steal cars in town. Those were the main people we were exposed to. Through organized youth clubs and churches, the South African Council of Churches used to arrange literature, we started to know a lot about the liberation struggle and what was happening in South Africa. That became a big motivation. There was no advantage in terms of resources. There was an advantage ***(interrupts self),*** at least for me I had literature which made me think differently from other people I was growing up with (Sipho, working-class).

You also made choices easy. You saw if I am a gangster, this is the most likely outcome. There were also doctors, pharmacists and lawyers. There were not many though those ones (Thabang, middle-class).

There was a time around the early 2000s when Telkom was putting in landline phones in remote villages. Around that time, they had a campaign for bursaries for people in Grades 11 and 12 to study Engineering. From there, they had a career expo, people could attend career expos. I know I attended a career expo in City A. Then I had the knowledge and I was able to make decisions and guide people who came after me through that process. What I remember is that the first batch of people who studied Engineering in my community were offered opportunities by Telkom at the time. Further on, they learnt that mining offered opportunities and they got that information and shared it with other people in the village. That is always how we had information (Noxolo, working-class).

LM: You mentioned that you did not get to explore careers before choosing the one you are in. How did you choose the tertiary qualification that you enrolled in?
KM: That is a very funny story. I took that one up, I studied Economics. I took that up because I was good in Economics at the time. Like I said, the place that I grew up in is very underdeveloped. There isn't much even in terms of subjects at school. There wasn't a huge variety where you could say, I am interested in let's say consumer stuff. Actually, I am interested in dramatic arts. We only had two choices between Accounting, Business Management or Physical Science. Those are the two options that I had. I kinda sucked at Physical Science. I failed that and said goodbye. I did very well in Economics. So that is how I got to study that. In Grade 11 when I was completing forms for university. My mother was still around at that time. I was asking her, what I should want to study. What should I apply for? It was a struggle because we didn't know. It was between two referrals. I don't know what else is out there. We never got to explore. Maybe if we had more options at school. We could have sat down and said how about this or how about that. I really had two choices. The other one I got bad marks for so the next best thing was Economics. I mean it was a good choice at the time.
(Khensani, middle-class).

6.2.3. Suburbs

6.2.3.1. Sociocultural context

In 1991, the Groups Areas Act of 1950 that enacted racially segregated residential areas was abolished (Donaldson et al., 2013). Black Africans who had the requisite economic capital moved to historically to the suburbs. There was a minute number of black Africans such as Banthatile (middle-class) who grew up in the suburbs during the apartheid era. Banthatile's (middle-class) mother was in the domestic service sector and her employer believed that mothers should not be separated from their children. Banthatile's (middle-class) mother was allowed to live with her children on her employer's property. The employer further unofficially adopted Banthatile and her brother:

> They built the cottage especially ***(interrupts self)***. They didn't actually have a cottage. No, I don't know if it's worth noting, but when they employed my mom, there wasn't a cottage, but when my mom took on the job, they specially built a cottage for her, which I thought was interesting because it goes back to the lawyer saying, you know, she doesn't separate mother and child. They built my mom like this two-bedroom cottage with a bathroom, and it was really dignified to a point where, when the house was sold it's now sort of, like, a rental that they used. So it is very well built. They considered my mom, they gave her dignity. They didn't just give her like a little room and a toilet outside, they actually could have. They considered her, they considered us as the kids as well, and then they built for all of us (Banthatile, middle-class).

Suburbs are located closer to economic hubs when compared to townships and villages (Chipkin, 2012; Donaldson et al., 2013). People who live in townships and rural areas commute long distances to work and spend a considerable amount of money on travel costs (Makgetla, 2020; World Bank, 2018). The residents of most suburbs are white and middle-class (Foster & Wale, 2017). Most members of the working class, across all racial groups,

cannot afford to live in these areas (Foster & Wale, 2017). Makgetla (2020) states that in 2017, the average resident of a suburb had an income of R30 000 a month whilst the average salary of a township resident was R5 200 per month. Makgetla (2020) further indicates that people who live in the suburbs receive better municipal services and they are less likely to experience electricity or water cuts when compared to those who live in townships and rural areas. Hence, people who live in the suburbs are likely to navigate social environments that are characterized by material comfort and abundant resources (Dietze & Knowles, 2016, Kraus et al., 2011).

Thato (middle-class) indicated that her family moved to the suburbs to be closer to good schools and her father's workplace. Lebohang (working-class) who grew up in an inner city neighbourhood also indicated that it was more convenient to live in an inner city neighbourhood than in the township:

> I didn't have to wake up at 5 am anymore. All of us were now in town. For the parents, it was more feasible for my mother to be the one who was travelling as all of us were in school on this side (Thato, middle-class).

> I still remember that it was busy in town, obviously. People always making their way. Township A was a bit chilled. To get to town ***(from township A)*** you had to take a taxi. With the inner city, you were in town. If you wanted bread, you just go downstairs (Lebohang, working-class).

6.2.3.2.Normative culture specific selves and behavioural patterns

According to Piff et al. (2010), individuals who have abundant material resources mitigate the impact of social threats through their economic capital. Individuals who live in environments that have abundant material resources tend to prioritize their preferences as they have minimal communal obligations (Stephens et al., 2014). Thato (middle-class)

indicated that her family was close by when she lived in a rural village but her stories about the suburbs did not include her neighbours or the community that she lived in. Reitumetse (middle-class) also provided a country-level account when describing the neighbourhoods that she grew up in but she also did not speak about her neighbours or the community that she lived with in South Africa:

> LM: What were the differences and similarities between living in a suburb and a village?
> TK: I didn't have to wake up at 5 am anymore. The family was closer in the village. My grandmother and uncles lived in the next street. The family was closer, you know. In town, waking up was better (Thato, middle-class).

> I grew up in many places as you may know. I was born in Zambia and grew up in exile. I was surrounded by a lot of people when I was growing up. My grandparents were there. We were mainly not in our country of nationality. I got to engage with a lot of different cultures. We moved around. I then stayed in Egypt, and then Belgium. I was very young, but in Zambia one thing that was big was community and support. From various people. People didn't have to be close to you to help you. Everything was about how to build a community and how to support one another. And how you could achieve together. As opposed to Belgium where it was about self and doing it for yourself. Not a lot of engagement with outside communities unless they knew you from school or through meetings that my father had. That is how we would meet people. It was more of a community where they keep to themselves (Reitumetse, middle-class).

Banthatile (middle-class) and Lethiwe (middle-class) placed their stories within their local communities. They described how members of their communities were diverse but connected. These connections, however, were weak when compared to those of people who lived in homelands as they were not characterized by explicit social obligations (Piff et al., 2010) :

> Suburb X was quite interesting because it was like, on the left-hand side were the English-speaking people. On the right-hand side was Afrikaans speaking, but for whatever reason, despite the 70s being a segregated time, there was a lot of harmony in Suburb X. It was almost like politics were outside of that neighbourhood because the Afrikaans people got on with the English people. And then you know, obviously people

with domestic workers as in our case. We were all part of the community. So yes, we knew our place but we were never made to always feel like, you know, we are the outcasts (Banthatile, middle-class).

That area was a small town, predominately Indian town. There were few black ***(African)*** people. It comprised of teachers, police officers and correctional services wardens. Traditional occupations, your nurses. I grew up surrounded by those people. It was a very close community. You were not only raised by your parents but the whole area was your parents. Including the Indian parents. You didn't want any elders to see you doing anything wrong. Without your parent's permission, they would reprimand you and spank you. You could not even report that at home. Because you will get another hiding. A very tight community (Lethiwe, middle-class).

A majority of research participants who grew up in the suburbs started interacting with members of other racial groups from a young age. Most of these participants also stated that they were politically aware from a young age as they grew up in homes where their parents or guardians were involved in political activities. These participants also had caregivers who communicated that they were equal to others. Participants who grew up in the suburbs were further exposed to the cultural narratives of racialised competence at a young age (Durrheim et al., 2007; Reuben & Bobat, 2014). Some parents psychologically armoured research participants in this study by encouraging them to be excellent and by telling them that they were competent (Bell & Nkomo, 2001):

I was the only black ***(African)*** swimmer in my school. When we would go and compete with other schools, they had no blacks. And I remember one particular time I must have been about ***(interrupts herself).*** I was getting to swim in this one event. And so your teacher calls you just before it's your event. So I was 12 so well, the elevens were swimming, she would come in and call the 12-year-olds to line up and get ready. I remember walking past the parents of the other schools and one of the ladies, obviously, it's all white people, and I'm a child. But can I tell you what, when I was walking past one of the mothers said the black girl who will help her if she drowns, who's going to give her CPR? So in my mind, I said I do not need to compete with the other girls. I just want to know whose daughter this is. As if my thoughts were loud. I heard her call her child. That's what I did, I just made sure that I beat her daughter. I got second place. I had tried

and ended up beating everybody else as well. That's still your gladness. The mother was saying you're not good enough, know your place and I think that's why my godmother made sure that I got involved in things that were not for black people. So she made sure that we do, because why? We need to fight this (Banthatile, middle-class).

I was raised by pro-black parents; they were AZAPO members for context. So for me in the work space, I am always like the principle of black consciousness. Just always excellence. Excellence just understanding that we blacks are enough. That we are capable and we can do. I carry that always within me. That we are capable (Thato, middle-class).

I actually remember this one time I had just arrived at the Jewish school. So obviously, I did not start in grade 1 there. I started in Standard 3 ***(Grade 5).*** Immediately, what they did is that they would take all the black children who were newcomers to extra English. Yet, the white children who were newcomers were not taken to extra English. And I remember raising that with my mother. It was a decision that they had made. They did not know me and they had already decided that this one must go to this class. I know that they did it because some of the black children came from township schools. But already that is also a judgement. The assumption is that they are not up to scratch. But they also did it to me who was coming from another multiracial school. So I remember, this was my gripe, why all of us were not going to the extra lessons. Even the white children (Reitumetse, middle-class).

Research participants who grew up in this context were also exposed to parents or guardians who had achieved a life that was characterized by material comfort. Some participants indicated that this sent a message to them that they could also influence their future. This upbringing differed with that of research participants in this study who grew up in areas where they had no role models and they had to rely on the cultural narrative of education being a gateway to upward mobility to fuel their ambitions :

LM: In your opinion, how does your socio-economic status compare to that of your parents?

TK: Guys, I was broke for a long time ***(laughs).*** Now I am working toward what I know. What I grew up as. For a long time, I felt that I wasn't where my life was when growing up. For the longest of the longest time. I am getting there slowly.

LM: Do you think your parents have more than what you have now?

TK: Yeah, guys my mom is the best. They did well.

(Thato, middle-class).

I saw how my parents had to work for every single thing that they attained. I think it's a positive graph from (***interrupts self)*** I know sometimes there were slumps. It was an upward graph of seeing how hard work actually, ***(interrupts self)*** you get the results of hard work. Reaping the rewards. You must be driven but also give yourself time to learn certain things and develop yourself almost as if it is certain that better things are coming. That is how I perceive it (Reitumetse, middle-class).

Parents in this context also communicated to their children that education was a gateway to upward mobility (Bray et al., 2010). Education in this context was not limited to academics but included sports and cultural activities. Research participants who grew up in this setting were further encouraged to stand out from others through their achievements or excellent behaviour (Manstead, 2018):

So I think a good child because we were very traditional. I wouldn't really say traditional, it was the mere fact that we were in exile. It means you stood out and fought. We were more concerned about future security and I think it comes from how they had to live. If you were someone who went to school, who managed to complete your qualification and get a good job that would be defined as a good child. Someone who was able to finish what they started. Especially around education. Education was quite important for them. For them, that was a good child (Reitumetse, middle-class).

My family was all about excellent work, ethics the whole time, it was just almost unrelenting. They were. You know, you have to achieve in sports, you have to achieve in academics, you have to achieve, you know, they always had a goal and and they had that work ethic in place for me (Banthatile, middle-class).

Because I was the firstborn, I had to make sure that the things that I did make sense. Leading by example…..Pretty much being responsible, just leading. Make sure you pass

well at school so that they do not use you as an example at home of someone who is not passing or being naughty. It was never me. I did sport, I did culture. I got by academically. I am not the one who was breaking windows, though the others did. I made sure that I was never quoted that you see why they are naughty, it's because their older sister is also doing this. It was not me. Even now it is not me (Thato, middle-class).

Furthermore, participants in this study who grew up in the suburbs indicated that they became aware at a young age that people had different cultures. For these participants social connections were forged through appreciating cultural diversity and not by aiming to be similar to others:

> The exposure to different cultures. Different people. You learn how other people do things and you tend to accept different people easily because you've mixed with so many different people and cultures. You don't get culture shock. You just accept people for who they are (Reitumetse, middle-class).

> It was interesting seeing Afrikaans people try to immerse themselves in an English context. So I think growing up to me that was incredibly amusing because it just shows us that regardless we can be the same colour but if we don't speak the same language then there are going to be differences. We need to make room for differences. So the Afrikaans people struggle coming into an English context. So it is a humbling experience to say that not all white people are the same. It's all it. Actually, sometimes it comes down to culture. People have different cultures (Banthatile, middle-class).

Banthatile (middle-class) indicated that appreciating cultural diversity for her entailed challenging her stereotypes and navigating politics around racial loyalty:

> Specifically my brother, and I had two friends, there were two Afrikaans boys, who were older than my brother, and they were older than me. They were probably six years older than me. And they used to always say to me if anybody bothers you must come and tell us. So, it was that kind of ***(interrupts self)*** I always in my head, knew I had a brother called Louis. That I had a brother called Thinus. The loveliest Afrikaans family you could ever think about. And I remember one particular time, they asked me to help them. They had locked themselves out of the house. And I was a young girl, I must have been about 10 years old and Thinus was this tall big rugby player-looking Afrikaans boy and he

> called me and he said that Banthatile, you need to get onto my shoulders, I'm gonna lift you, and I want to throw you through the window, and then you must go in and come downstairs and unlock the door. I remember thinking to myself, yoh, I need to get on top of this white boy's shoulders to get into the house, but to him, it was almost like, but you Banthatile are from the neighbourhood. You are like my younger sister. What's the problem? You know? So I think those are the things as well, that when we had those conversations, they necessarily didn't see me as a black ***(African)*** person. The way I was seeing myself in that context.
>
> I think, just I'll use my extended family because my upbringing was multiracial. So there was black and white in the same home setup. And then going back to North West, which is just my family and my community, as African people, they kind of almost felt like. In their words, they would say we sit on the fence. We couldn't you know they were pro-black but when you live in a diverse set up you get to see both sides of the story and you get to see not everything has to be black and white. There can be a middle, a middle path. And so those are the kind of debates that would happen in the family where they felt like we had ***(interrupts self)*** we were not in touch with our real selves and we felt like we are in touch with our real selves. But we had to make room for other people. So we had different perspectives. And I also think to be fair on them living in, in what was referred to at that time as a Bantustan, there was a lack of things. They were lacking infrastructure, they were lacking educational opportunities. So they were speaking their truth from a black ***(African)*** person, they were disadvantaged at every level, we don't have roads, we don't have hospitals, we don't have the basic survival things and then coming from a city space. I had access to all of that. So in hindsight now, I can actually see where the gaps were. They were speaking their truth and I was trying to ***(interrupts self)*** maybe or maybe my ***(family)*** and I, we were speaking from our family set-up, my mum's perspective. So we were comparing apples with pears. We weren't all talking about the same thing. They were talking from lack which was genuine and we were talking from a space where we might not have been able to relate to that lack.

According to Khunou (2015), middle-class black Africans could not fully enjoy their social class location during the apartheid era as they had to also navigate socioeconomic and political limitations that were imposed on them by the apartheid government. Before 1991, participants who grew up in middle-class and racially mixed environments did so outside the

country or in contexts where there were few black Africans. This was perceived as a disadvantage by some of the research participants in this study:

> Some of the disadvantages are you don't actually get in contact a lot with your own home native community. You know, it's important to also understand fully your culture, your own language and the way your community functions. So the disadvantage is that when you do visit your community, you are sort of a bit of a fish out of the water (Banthatile, middle-class).
>
> I would say the disadvantage at that time was simply because although yes as someone who was part of the ANC, I was surrounded by family. You had a sense of belonging. But it almost felt, at that time I had not come to South Africa, you still feel anxious that you want to know this place that you belong to. That people are talking about and you have not been there. Where you have a longing, although you hear all these things, that there are riots. That the Boers are doing this and that. You still wanted to be there. That is me personally. I felt that I didn't know my people, so to speak (Reitumetse, middle-class).

The socio-psychological perspective of social class argues that people who grow up in middle-class contexts are socialized to express their preferences and needs (Dietze & Knowles, 2016, Kraus et al., 2011, Stephens et al., 2014). Bathatile (middle-class) who grew up with a black African mother and a white godmother indicated that being expressive was dependent on the position that one occupied on the social hierarchy. Brannon et al. (2017) concur and further argue that experiences of racial discrimination, oppression and prejudice can restrain black people from being fully expressive as they have to protect themselves in contexts where they are devalued. Carrim (2012) also found that female managers of Indian descent in her study were taught that good women were soft-spoken and they avoided conflict at all costs. The excerpts below from Banthatile (middle-class) demonstrate that prescripts from different gateway contexts can converge to mute the voices of those in subordinate positions:

> LM: And when you think back to that time, what did your family consider to be a good child?

BM: When ***it's (my emphasis)*** seen and not heard.

LM: And what lessons did you learn from your family that were helpful to you in the workplace?

BM: That's an interesting thing because obviously my godmother being British, she's more unspoken and my mom being an African person and the time that they grew up in, she was sort of almost submissive. So it was almost like what I learned is that you have to first read the situation but I think my default was to be submissive. My godmother would always say, you know, just speak your truth unemotionally. Or at the time, you know, black people didn't have a voice. So even when you spoke, I don't always feel that it resonated or came through. So what we learned to do is not necessarily push your point across, but it's almost like you learn to adapt and sometimes that's not altogether good.

BM: One day, the school called the parents of seven black ***(African)*** children in my class and said we needed to be downgraded to Standard Grade English. My mother was the one who went to the meeting and my family decided to not sign the consent form. My teacher called my home. My godmother picked up the phone and said to the teacher I'm a British woman, you can hear that on the phone, that I am a British woman. I oversee her homework. And I encouraged her to read. And on top of that, I'm an author and a lawyer. I think I would know how to teach my own goddaughter English. She's very independent. But I make sure I mean, she doesn't actually need me to look over all her work all the time. But I just take the time, because I want to make sure that she's on point. And what is interesting is the conversation was never raised again. And I was probably the only one out of that group of black ***(African)*** kids, I think who was not downgraded.

LM: So at least having her in your corner helped you a lot.

BM: Because I think we like to think ***(interrupts herself)*** it really does help. Because I think we think the world is fair and the world isn't fair. It goes back to my statement, when you asked me about business, this business here, business doesn't hear your voice unless you have the right person in your corner. And that is an example. That's how we were treated in school and it is how people are treated in the office. And it goes back to the fact that even in the office, you always feel like you have to be combative, just to be heard.

6.3. MISMATCHES WITH THE WORKPLACE CONTEXT

The models of competence used in different workplaces are based on normative culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviours that are a cultural ideal in most societies (Stephens et al., 2014; Stephens et al., 2015). These norms define what it means to be competent in an environment (Stephens et al., 2015). Individuals who are socialized to enact culture-specific selves and patterns of behaviour that are aligned with the cultural ideals of gatekeepers have better opportunities to experience upward career mobility when compared to those who do not have these cultural abilities (Stephens et al., 2015). Hardy (2017) states that people are likely to become aware that there are other ways of perceiving the world when they are exposed to new evaluation standards that assess what it means to be good and competent in a context. Exposure to new contexts can result in individuals adopting different normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns (Phillips et al., 2020a, Phillips et al., 2020b). Participants in this study indicated that they had to make the following adjustments in order to successfully navigate the work context.

6.3.1. Black African Cultural Norms

The most common adjustment that research participants in this study indicated that they had to make was moving away from some of the prescripts of black African cultures. These cultures promote diplomacy, indirect confrontation, tact and respect for others (Myres, 2013). Black African cultures also promote respect for hierarchies and most participants in this study were taught to give the utmost respect to people who were older than them. These participants stated that they had to renegotiate some of what they were taught at home in order to successfully navigate the work context:

> One thing that pops into my mind is when I started working as an intern. My mentor was a white German lady. And I couldn't look her in the eye ***(interrupts self),*** worse it was a white woman. You don't look your elders in the eye. She misinterpreted that as dishonesty. It's only once we had that conversation and she told me when you talk to me, look me in the eye. She taught me but it was a difficult adjustment. It felt very uncomfortable. I didn't even look my parents in the eye when I was talking to them. She trained me. When I am talking to other people, not only whites when you interact in the workplace you look people in the eyes and tell them what you think. You don't talk to people whilst looking down. That is the best thing that I ever learnt (Lethiwe, middle-class).

> When I was growing up, I couldn't call my aunt by her name. I had to use a prefix and say aunty so and so. Even my brother I had to say Buti so and so and my sister Sesi so and so. Everybody older than me has to have a prefix before their names. In the world of work, even though there is a hierarchy, in terms of addressing others, I found in corporate like it was more of a flat hierarchy. John is John. It is not Uncle John. That was initially intimidating because I started my career in a white corporate space. It became less daunting. It was just the norm and I got used to it. But now that I am in government ***(black African space),*** it is challenging me. Do I still address John as John even though he is older than me? If I say uncle it shifts the scale of our engagement and now I can't engage at the same level as when I just call him John. I have to sugarcoat my feedback and mind my words when I talk to them ***(older people)*** and that impacts the output we need to deliver in the workplace (Lethabo, middle-class).

Furthermore, some research participants mentioned that being respectful to adults entailed not being assertive, obeying all instructions without questioning and not being expressive. This also meant not taking charge unless when instructed to do so. Carrim (2012) also found that female managers of Indian descent in her study indicated that they were taught to respect authority. Thus, cultures that value interdependence inculcate and reward those who are compliant:

> You know sometimes, blind obedience. My aunt used to tell me that sometimes you do not have to fight back, humble yourself and let trouble pass over your head. You take a fall and admit a mistake that you didn't make. When there was an argument they would say, you did this. And I would say, I didn't. If you continue arguing, they would say you

are being disrespectful. You end up taking the fall for something that you didn't do. You end up not being assertive. Don't argue your point assertively because it makes you look arrogant and disrespectful. When an adult doesn't believe that you were not the one who made a mistake; just admit that you did ***(laughs).*** For them, it was a way of respect. You now realize that, that was wrong. It is how we were taught but it was wrong. Imagine going to the world of work like that, you are never assertive. I am taking a fall for something I didn't do. Being fearful of arguing my point because my boss will think that I am disrespectful if I stand my ground. Those kinds of things are in our culture but our culture confuses respect with assertiveness. A child must be able to stand his ground. A child must be able to say I didn't do this even when an adult doesn't believe them. So those things were embedded in me. When I was young in my career, I was afraid to argue my point because it would come through as being arrogant or disrespectful (Relebogile, working-class).

Not speaking your truth. Holding back your feelings when you are feeling strongly about something. Not speaking out when something doesn't work for you. When something is violating your values or your feelings. The not speaking out part when you disagree. That didn't help, that didn't help me in the world of work. Holding back didn't help and I learnt that from home. I learnt that from home. What is this fancy word that they use now? It's not gaslighting. It's invalidating your feelings. Or undermining your feelings. Or downplaying your feelings. Downplaying how much people have hurt you or disrespected you. That didn't work in the workplace. People don't stop when they see that you are such a doormat. They continue if you don't speak out (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

I think this also applies to a lot of black people. So, my parents did not have a lot of mechanisms to raise us. What they mostly used was escape through the church. Now you are taught to be humble, to be an instruction receiver. To carry out the instructions. You know the typical church thing. You must just get there and be told. When you get to the workplace, it's different. The first thing they expect is that you must be articulate. You must know what you want. You must speak out. You must have a vision of your own. You can't just say if they ask you what do you think of this and you say I will ask Jesus to help me. Which was and I found that it took a long time to get over the culture of extreme obedience. I am describing this thing where you are not expected to challenge authority, but in the workplace if you don't do so, they think there is something wrong with you (Sipho, working-class).

For some participants, resolving this conflict meant learning to balance obedience, respect and assertiveness. The behavioural patterns that research participants in this study adopted entailed still treating other people in a respectful manner but making boundaries clear when interactions became disrespectful. Some participants indicated that they continued to be obedient when interacting with others:

> LM: You speak a lot about being polite, obedient and listening well. Has this disadvantaged you in the workplace somehow or do you still use these prescripts that you were taught by your family in the workplace?
> PB: It's part of my character. Eventually, when you follow these prescripts it becomes part of your character. It is not easy to change your character. It is easy to change your personality but not your character. Character is stable. Personality can change based on surroundings and what you are exposed to.
> (Phillip, middle-class).

> Because when I grew up in the village, there was always a sense of hierarchy. People older than you always superseded what you say. When you come to the workplace, you can have a manager who is twice your age and you could also have a subordinate who is also twice your age. It was around age that I had to unlearn a lot of things. But I did not discard it completely. The common teaching was around you should treat people with respect. For me regardless of what they are in the corporate hierarchy, you should maintain that respect because I see them for the individuals that they are but I understand what they say will not supersede what I say. If I am in a position of higher power at work. I can make decisions that can affect people that are older than me (Noxolo, working-class).

> Look in the workplace respect works but obedience doesn't work. Sometimes it gets misunderstood as a weakness. I had to learn to be assertive but with respect because of the environment that I am in. This is the environment that I am in. I will not go further than this but I can still have a good relationship with you because we now have that understanding. So, I didn't learn to be assertive at home but I learnt obedience and it never worked for me in the workplace (Lethiwe, middle-class).

> What comes as the other side of it especially when we think of respect, I found mutual respect important. At times, I would struggle with older colleagues who were

disrespectful. When I was growing up, it was not negotiable. If someone is an elderly person, I had to respect them. At times, when you find people who are disrespectful and older, it is a bit difficult to confront them until I later learnt other skills (Katlego, middle-class).

6.3. 2. Owning One's Voice

Research participants in this study who were taught at home to speak up found that their voices were being silenced in the workplace. Sometimes this silencing took place because gatekeepers meant well and they wanted to protect the person. According to Côté (2019), members of subordinate groups are also silenced in the workplace because others expect them to be submissive because of the stereotype that they are incompetent. Thus, black Africans need to pitch their voices in the workplace at a level that is above the limits prescribed by black African cultures but that is below levels that make gatekeepers uncomfortable:

> TT: Sometimes with black ***(Africans)*** people in the workplace, they expect us to be humble. Not humble but we shouldn't voice our opinions. So to speak.
> LM: So you were from a family that allowed you to speak your mind?
> TT: Yes, but within boundaries.
> (Thabang, middle-class)

> Oh, you know, at the beginning of working in corporate. I worked with the gentleman by the name of John Pearson, he was such an amazing human being. …as his assistant, when I met like my counterparts, whites, they were more bullish in their approach. He would actually go out and fight my battles for me. In a way it was good, but in a way that was bad. I wanted to speak up. And he felt like they were not respectful to listen to me. So then he would speak to them. And as a manager, they would be forced to listen. So, but he always used to say, that I give you permission to be fully yourself. I need you to show up. I don't want you to become, like, what they want you to be, I need you to show up for this to work. And I don't think people encourage others to be that. People always tried to change something or correct something (Banthatile, middle-class).

Self-promotion. I was very shy about my work and I would not speak about my work. If I am doing something and I am involved in a high worthy thing, I would ***(interrupts self),*** people will know. People will know. I won't shy away from it, People can say I am bragging but I don't care. I have kept quiet for too long. Things would pass me by whilst I was holding on to this statement ***(of being humble).*** I will tell you I am on this thing and doing these things (Lethabo, middle-class).

6.3.3. The Costs of Standing Up for Others

Piff et al. (2018) state that people who grow up in environments where they are socialized to be socially responsive adopt a moral-relational style that involves minimizing harm when interacting with others, showing compassion and advancing the welfare of others in a social environment:

> For my mom, a good child is someone who can coexist with other people without any chaos. No matter what space you are in if you are just a person who can adapt to different spaces but be able to be yourself. That is what my mother would define as a good child. For my dad, I think for my dad, it would be anyone who wants to achieve. My dad does not like people who are very complacent in achieving. I think he would also define a good child as someone who would be able to speak for himself or others around him. That would be a good child for them. And also someone who pays it forward. That is the scene that I grew up around, someone who just pays it forward (Noxolo, working-class).

> Mainly from my father was being able to stand up for myself. At the same time, being able to stand up for those who were more vulnerable. I tend to be some type of activist at times. I will stand up for underdogs, interns and students. So, I have gone up against colleagues. That is the one other thing I took (Katlego, middle-class).

Research participants in this study who adopted an interdependent moral-relational style indicated that they were people warriors, activists or pro-people. This behaviour, however, had a cost in the workplace. Gatekeepers punished those who stood up for others by limiting their careers, instituting formal disciplinary processes or by socially ostracizing the person.

Studies indicate that those who challenge hierarchies in the workplace disrupt the orderliness of interactions (Barrett, 2015; Calhoun, 2003; Schubert, 2014). Individuals who challenge hierarchies are likely to lose their jobs, be relegated to non-performing areas or be socially ostracized (Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Meghji, 2017; Mighti, 2020; Myres, 2013; Schoeman, 2010):

> I don't think I screwed up when I joined the union but they have derailed me. Remember, business doesn't want, as much as they say, they are pro-people, and they do not want one person or a couple of people to be the voice of the people. I think I became that as a shop steward. So, I put a knife in my back and became that target person. I became the problematic child. Coupled with my already graceful mouth. That became an issue…... Bruce came to me and said, I had quit being in the union and in the executive, I am glad you have been able to put yourself first. Almost as a reward for putting myself first, he gave me a promotion. I don't know if people needed me to leave the union to think I can be for the business. Bruce promoted me to a position that I did not like but it was a promotion (Thato, middle-class).

> Troops are supposed to behave in a particular way. If you stand up for a troop because you see the troop is almost being ***(interrupts self),*** the officer is almost using his or her power in a way that is unethical, then you stand up for the troop. Then it comes across that you were undermining your fellow officer especially when you work in an environment where you are working as a team. They see it as rebelliousness. At other times, it feels like a betrayal to them. And you are sort of excommunicated. If I can put it that way. I have had issues with that, especially in other contexts like working in the military. I was almost charged because of that. Because they take rank very seriously. At some point, there were consequences (Katlego, middle-class).

> TB: …. I am the greatest people warrior. I will fight for people that cannot fight for themselves.
> LM: Is there a cost to that?
> TB: Yes, especially with white people. ….especially in an environment where you find yourself in a family business that was established by the father and the son is the CEO. You notice that the relationship has shifted. You are trying to have teamwork for example and you can see when you do a graduate programme, a graduate programme is for Africans, Coloureds and Indians but you can see the white senior management are on

> some even our kids don't have these opportunities but unfortunately they are not black. You will always have those vibes come in. but when they know you are the expert in this and you are competent enough to deliver, they can't do anything about it but you always have dynamics coming through (Tinyiko, working-class).

According to Piff et al. (2010), individuals from interdependent cultures engage in socially responsive behaviour in order to build relationships and these individuals sometimes perform acts of generosity at their own expense. People from independent cultures also engage in prosocial acts but their benevolent actions are not at their own expense and they also sometimes have expectations of reciprocity. Thato (middle-class), at the time of the interview, had just transitioned from a specialist role and being an executive member of a trade union to management. The excerpt below indicates that she is still socially responsive as she cares about the development of others but she is now selective about whom she helps and her prosocial behaviour is no longer at her expense:

> I am someone who thinks succession anyway. I am very much a succession planner. In management, the succession also needs to tie to my bonus. There is a bonus attached to my job. So who would be good, to make me look good, to make sure we meet our targets as well. That is the difference. Whereas when I was a shop steward I was looking at academics. I usually put that in front. I'd also put how long people have been there. We can't keep having people put up their hands and say no. What do we need to get them to the next level? Succession I have always been a succession planner. Always always always. You can wake me up in the middle of the night and I will tell you who needs to go where and what they have. I have been invested in knowing what people studied. What the next job needs. Why these people need to be there. Dealing with gatekeepers as a shop steward was easy. I was very invested in members. I could come to you and tell you why this person needed a job more than the person you thought. Based on things that I can still tell you today. Not necessarily that I liked people, but I still use the same approach in management. Just now I need to look at my own bonus.

6.3.4. Who forms part of my community?

According to Bourdieu (1986), social capital allows members of a group to collectively benefit from each other's capital. Being part of a group gives a person assurance that members of the group will come to their rescue when they are being threatened and it also creates an obligation for other members to intervene when the weakest member of the group is under threat (Bourdieu, 1986). Some of the participants in the current study indicated that they had a social obligation to transfer skills and open up opportunities for other black Africans. When working in organizations that were dominated by white people, these participants took it for granted that other black Africans in the environment were part of their in-group. This meant that some participants had to make adjustments when they realized that not all black Africans regarded members of their racial group as part of their in-group. Participants who worked in spaces dominated by other black Africans also indicated that they learnt that the workplace was a competitive space after they had experienced people violating their expectations of reciprocity (Bourdieu, 1986):

> I don't need black or white people to be successful in life. I am not dependent on them. I can voice my opinion because I have nothing to lose and I have nothing to gain (Thabang, middle-class).

> That element of excellence comes through a lot. That discipline within the work space to say, we are here to open up spaces for other people as well. When Thato is capable, they will have more faith in blacks ***(Africans).*** Oh yeah, we can put them in (Thato, middle-class).

> There will be people ***(black Africans)*** that will do you dirty. But if you are with kin, they want you to grow stronger, even in the way that it is done it's with an understanding that your win is not your win only. It's a collective win. It's like in the lily whiteness; you work so hard because you don't want to fail. Your failure is a collective failure. When you fail it's going to be extrapolated to the next person that takes over your job. Because Tinyiko didn't do it. We don't think you will be able to do it. You want to win so that you

> can set the space so that if a black ***(African)*** person takes over then Lord may they take over a space that works, type of thing (Tinyiko, working-class).

> This aspect of being communal, trying to be communal at all times had its challenges, especially in the workplace. The workplace requires you to be able to work independently. At times you think you are sharing information and they take that information to benefit themselves. So, not having that balance that somethings you have to keep to yourself and not share the information that you have. Being able to understand that it is not always about the team. What the family would say. Sometimes it is about your own advancement (Katlego, middle-class).

6.3.5. Lack of Intergenerational Knowledge

Most participants in this study are part of the first or second cohort of black Africans to work in the post-apartheid era. Most of these participants had parents who were employed in middle-class black African occupations or who worked in working-class professions. Kim and Scheider (2005) mention that parents are an important source of valuable information as they influence how children see the world and the strategies that they can adopt to deal with challenges. Black African participants who were interviewed by Myres (2013) indicated that most black Africans were at a disadvantage in the workplace as they did not come into these spaces with generational knowledge of how the game is played. Most black Africans had to learn the tacit rules of the games played in the workplace through trial and error (Myres, 2013). These are some of the answers that participants in the current study provided when asked if there were lessons that they learnt from home that were not helpful in the workplace:

> Yes, there are. This includes thinking that having qualifications will make it easier for you to progress in terms of work. And ignore other realities that you might face. For instance, racism in the workplace. It was something that they ***(parents)*** had not foreseen it could be a hindrance, it might trip you up. From their experiences, they

worked in a racially divided environment where they were not working with white people (Phetogo, middle-class).

I would say my parents exactly what I am saying. They say hard work; you must do this and do that. You must develop yourself. They also tended to believe that you must stay long where you are working so that you can get promoted. So that you can progress. But I saw later when I was working that why sit at a company that is going to give me a 2% increase and no promotion for so long. Where I can actually be the asset that the market needs. And I can put myself out there for the market to compete for me (Reitumetse, middle-class).

I guess the normal sort of things that parents used to teach us that to be successful you need to be a doctor. When I got into the world of work, I realized there are things that could be done to be successful without being an accountant…The career choices that we could have were not limited to that. But there was that consensus that in order to be a successful person, you must do maths and science. In the real world, that does not apply (Thami, middle-class).

6.4.CONCLUSION

This chapter answered the first research question: what are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school? Specifically, this chapter discussed normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations acquired in the home context. The discussion focused on home contexts that were located in rural villages, townships, inner city neighbourhoods and suburbs. The chapter described each context, explained the hierarchies that were prevalent in that environment and discussed the normative culture-specific selves that were socialized in each environment .

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESEARCH FINDINGS: SCHOOL CONTEXT

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will continue to answer the first research question: What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school? Specifically the chapter will discuss the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations socialized in the school context. The school contexts discussed in this chapter are schools that only had black African students and black African teachers; schools with multiracial or white teachers and a majority of black African students and multiracial schools with white teachers. The code of multiple school systems was used for research participants who had attended schools in more than one school context. Bold italics will continue to be used to reflect comments added by myself in the quotations of research participants.

7.2. SCHOOL CONTEXTS

Most schools that only have black African teachers and black African students are considered to be low performing schools and students who attend these schools have low prospects of being employed in middle-class occupations (de Clercq, 2020; Moses et al., 2017). Multiracial schools and schools with a majority of black African students and multiracial teachers form part of the functional education system and most black African students who

attend these school systems come from middle-class homes as these schools charge higher fees (Christie & Collins, 1982; Hunter, 2010). Students who go through these school systems have better prospects of being employed in middle-class occupations (de Clercq, 2020; Moses et al., 2017).

7.2.1. Multiple School Systems

7.2.1.1. Sociocultural context

Schools, irrespective of the system that they are in, have similar practices that are associated with how society understands what a school is (Christie, 1998). Thami (middle-class) who attended both multi-racial and black African schools indicated that these schools had routines, rules on how students were supposed to behave and methods of ensuring that rules were adhered to (Christie, 1998). For Thami (middle-class), the main difference between these school contexts was differences in the levels of resources:

> So there was no noisemaking in both. Doing homework. Not loitering. Abiding by school rules and times and those sorts of things…But obviously, the difference between black and white schools is the level of funding that is there for white schools. In fact in black schools, the facilities and things are different. But besides that, there wasn't much difference.

Katlego (middle-class), who had attended all three school systems, mentioned that the commonality between all the systems was that teachers gave disproportionate attention to students whom they regarded as good. However, the criteria used by teachers to evaluate what made a student good was not the same in different contexts:

> In the villages, a good kid was the one who would agree to be sent to buy vetkoeks for the teachers and come back with all the change. It wasn't necessarily about your achievements but who your parents were as well. In high school it was different, one

teacher considered a good student to be ***(interrupts self)*** this teacher that I liked and who liked me back, considered a good student to be someone who went to the library a lot. As long as he sees you at the library because he was coordinating the school library, he saw you as a good kid. The one who does not make too much noise in the class and who does not answer back. That will be one version of a good student. And another teacher, his definition of a good student was one who will snitch on others and tell on others. The one who tries to be the teacher's pet, who will report on others. Then remind the teacher that he or she forgot to give us homework. I wouldn't be that kind of a good student or a good learner. And then to another teacher is the one who is thinking out of the box. The one who is always challenging the system. That kind of student was not popular with other teachers. This teacher liked students who would be called troublemakers by the school. For him, it was like what can you do beyond being a typical learner? It was about challenging religion in a Catholic school. He would ask questions that now people who ask these questions are considered to be against Christianity. He would teach learners to ask those questions, in a Catholic school it was something else. It would be more subjective from one teacher to another.

Other research participants who were exposed to multiple school systems mentioned that schools in different contexts adhered to diverse ideologies, they had different methods of rewarding and disciplining students and different schools focused on socializing specific normative-culture specific selves and behavioural patterns: Katlego (middle-class) offered this comprehensive summary of similarities and differences between school contexts mentioned in this study:

In the village school, the educational aspect included a lot of entertainment. It included play as one of the main things. There were sports. Now when I went to boarding school, it was more multiracial. Previously called multiracial. It was different first of all because of the language. We would get punished for speaking our mother tongue on the school premises. Secondly, also we didn't do as much sport as we did in the village school. That was the change. In the first, the village ones, corporal punishment was a must. Now looking back, it felt like abuse. We were seven or eight years old and we were being beaten with fan belts and pipes. That was hectic. And the more multiracial one was different. It was those things of naughty corners and that is why I don't think I would have lasted. Also, I think the last one was more interested in instilling the values of

Christianity They emphasized that a lot and they tried to work on the character of a child to try to mould it for the better in line with their values. So that was the difference. With the village school, it was also about what can you remember? See something, cram it and remember it without necessarily having to understand it. Those were the differences. In another, you have to learn, in another you have to cram, in another you have to think creatively. They allowed you to think creatively. To think beyond the context that you were in. I think at the end of the day, the multiracial school and the village school were about indoctrinating us in a particular way that did not allow us to think creatively….The village school was about cramming but they were promoting Botho, African values. The multiracial was about making us remember who is boss. That is what I am thinking now. It was just a reminder that as much as we think we are going there, we must remember who the real bosses are at the end of the day. They will indoctrinate you in a way that your language is not important, your values are not important and western values are more important. You have to be a gentleman, you have to do this, you have to be that. You have to call people sir; you have to stand up when a lady comes in. So, it was a different kind of indoctrination. The Catholic one would try to enhance the person you were but also on another level put forward the agenda of Christianity.

7.2.2. Black African Schools

7.2.2.1. Sociocultural context

Most research participants who started primary school in this context studied in schools that were close to where they lived. These schools had limited resources and some of the teachers did not have formal teaching qualifications:

> It was a well-built primary school with enough teachers. In the beginning, we didn't have enough classrooms. From Sub A ***(Grade 1)*** to Standard 2 ***(Grade 4)*** we did what is called platooning. We would have a group that comes in from 8 am to 12 pm and another group from 12 pm to 4 pm and you would exchange every other week because we didn't have enough classrooms. Yes, in Sub A (***Grade 1***), it was the classrooms where we had to use cow dung to clean them. The floor was made of cow dung. They improved them to cement floors. At some stage, we didn't have enough chairs and desks but the government came through. It was those primary schools where it didn't matter how young we were, we cleaned our classrooms ourselves. We swept at the end

of each class day. We were in different groups of cleaning the class. We would lift tables and chairs. As young as we were, we were about 6 or 7 years old. We learnt how to clean up after ourselves. We had decent ablution facilities but it was not your flushing toilet. It was your long drop toilets. They were decent. We kept them clean. We had one tap for the whole school with running water. And it was healthy enough to drink. Our primary school was next to a field so we were exposed to a bit of agriculture. So the agriculture lesson would take place in the field. It was a very sporty primary school. It was also very musical. We participated in all sports. Athletics and music competition. It had really good teachers. Really committed teachers. It was those years when teachers saw teaching as a calling, not as a job. Our teachers behaved like our parents. They were actually stricter than our parents. It was those years of corporal punishment. We were afraid to do something wrong. We were really beaten up at school. It was a very strict school, a lot of emphasis on discipline, neatness and cleanliness. Strong religious background as well. Our school principal was a very devout Christian. So it was a continuation of the protective environment that we got from the village and the church. (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

The primary school was a walking distance from my house. The infrastructure was good. It was a proper school. The building was intact. It was not lacking in any way from a structural perspective. I was taught by people that I considered my mothers at the time. It is your neighbours. Not your direct neighbours but people that you know. So, I did not really think of it much as a school but as a place where I was being taught by my second mothers. It was in the village. It was the kind of school where a lot of children were suffering. It was those ones, where there a were a lot of ***(interrupts self)***, government schools. Not paying tuition. We eat at school. You could also see the differences between a more privileged child and a child who wasn't. It was very much out there. You would have children coming in, I don't have shoes. I am using a paper bag as a school bag. Also the playground, is literally a ground where you play football. Nothing else, no extra-mural. Also, it was just a school (Khensani, middle-class).

The school was one block with five classes. These classes were from Standard One to Standard Five ***(Grade 3 to Grade 7).*** Sub A ***(Grade 1)*** was under a tree. Sub B ***(Grade 2)*** was in a Methodist church. And the other group was in a Pentecostal church. When you have passed those two grades, you would move to the main block. The person who taught my mother in Sub A. Also taught me and my son. That was the school. Fortunately for me, my aunt was just a few minutes away from the school. There was a main road that separated my home and the school. There were very old teachers. I am not sure if those

> teachers were qualified or not. If they were qualified, they did not have Grade 12 but they were teachers. And I still honour them like the one who taught me, my mum, my aunt and my son. Most of them were not qualified. I don't know what criteria was used to identify teachers, especially in the lower grades. In the higher grades, those teachers were qualified. In Standard 3 ***(Grade 5)*** and upwards, those were qualified teachers (Mokgadi, working-class).

For a majority of participants who studied in this school context, the transition to high school meant moving to schools outside their communities or to boarding schools. This was a welcome relief for some participants who moved away from hierarchies prevalent in their communities whereas for other participants this movement created an unwelcomed burden. High school also introduced different normative culture-specific selves for some of the research participants in this study:

> High school was different. We started to have more integration. We were in the middle, between two villages. So, we were no longer this one backward village. We were beginning to mix with some people from another world. We had a little bit of exposure, seeing children from different backgrounds. Seeing different teachers unlike the teachers at the old school who knew our backgrounds. The primary school teachers knew all of us and they knew our backgrounds. When we got to high school, the teachers would see you and not the background behind you. They did not call you so and so's child (Relebogile, working-class).

> The high school was vastly different. It could be because it was a boarding school. And the mere fact that it was accommodating people who were actually not from that area, people from different walks of life. Perhaps it could have been part and parcel of why it was different. In a sense when you walk into a classroom on your first day, the teacher knows no one. And it is a matter of I come from this place and you come from this place. I don't know maybe that is what would have made it different. The high school was different and it did not have that nonsense (***teachers judging students based on their social class)*** (Mpho, middle-class).

> In primary school, it was mostly the kids from the village. But because in our area there were not enough high schools. We were mixed with children from the township. We got to experience different behaviours. It was during those times when Madiba

> ***(Nelson Mandela)*** had just come out of prison. And politics were being revived again. You would have things like your SRCs (***Student Representative Councils)*** and students being called comrades. We didn't know that at primary school. High school was a bit radical. I remember when I was in Standard 7, which is Grade 9. The Matric students of that year locked the principal and teachers in the staffroom because they were demanding money for their farewell ***(laughs)…..*** High school was very different. High school was very different. We were not hostile to boys as well. We were forging relationships with boys that were serious. Competition in terms of being the best was also tight in high school. There were two boys in my class. No matter how hard I tried, I could not beat them in maths. They were so good. That took a lot of adjustment from my side. High school was very different. The teachers were still strict but they faced a lot of opposition from some students (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

> For us as much as we were the first ***(village)*** to have a primary school we did not have a secondary school until I started working. I walked to the secondary school which was situated in another village. It was a 5-kilometre walk. It was where my poverty was exposed. In primary school, nobody realized that I was this poor. But in secondary school, everybody knew I was poor. Even today, some people still remember that I was a poor girl. That is what I remember from that secondary school. I would go home on foot. But I was not the only one, we were many. I didn't have a pair of shoes, I didn't have a tunic and I didn't have anything. In primary school, I don't know who was sponsoring me with my school uniform. There was an anonymous person even today I don't know. When my tunic got torn, I will be given a new one. They will call me to the office and measure me and the next day I will get new school uniform. But in secondary school, none none none. That anonymous donor was nowhere to be found (Mokgadi, working-class).

Research participants in this study who attended schools that were located in urban townships indicated that these schools were based in areas that were dangerous and unpredictable:

> I did have a cousin who was shot two or three houses away from us when I was staying with my grandmother because he was part of a gang. Those were the disadvantages. Now we are 14, 15 with my cousins all of us born in 1978. The minute that he passes away the guys say okay now your protection is gone type of thing. That is how I ended up moving in with my mother. At some point, my mother moved to town because she was working

two jobs. It wasn't conducive for her to be moving between Township A and town. So she got a flat. I then moved in with her so that I could get into a taxi that would drop me literally at the school gate because things like that started happening during our teenage years (Tinyiko, working-class).

The only thing was that the level of violence had increased drastically when I went to high school. There was what they used to call black-on black-violence. So on your way to school, there will just be a Kombi passing by and shooting randomly. At the time, there used to be a political party called Inkatha Freedom Party and they used to work with apartheid bosses. So the main thing that defined my high school life was violence. It was normal for us to be sitting in class and the police would just run to the school and start shooting. Sometimes it was not really the police but the people from the hostel. The perpetrators of black-on-black violence (Sipho, working-class).

Research participants who attended schools in urban townships also indicated that their teachers cared about their development or they tried to help promising students succeed. Tinyiko (working-class) acknowledged that the teachers in her school behaved in a manner that contradicted the widely held narrative that teachers in urban black African schools were not committed to their work. These teachers were infamous for constantly being absent from work or for being indifferent about their teaching duties (Christie, 1998; Glaser, 2018; Kapp et al., 2014):

LM: Was there a difference in how the teachers treated the students that they considered good in comparison to those that they considered bad?
SD: No, we were largely bad students. Let me give you an example of the school that I went to. Only 10% passed matric. That was normal. Teachers always had a soft spot for those people who were performing better. So, they will even give them extra lessons, offer them weekend lessons, and motivate them. There was a way of treating good students differently in comparison to the so-called bad students (Sipho, working-class).

Truthfully speaking, the teachers were interested in getting you to matric so that you could have great advantages for your future … even though people did not believe it ***(interrupts self)*** the teachers did want kids to get an education and valuable stuff. They knew that we needed to get into university. Even that was a big advantage because we

> were surrounded by people who truly believed in educating kids (Tinyiko, working-class).

Schools in the homeland context were located in safe areas but the teachers were the ones who made the school environment unpredictable. Most schools in this context used corporal punishment and psychological abuse to punish students who did not adhere to school rules. Teachers further adopted an authoritarian stance when dealing with students. Students in this school system were taught to respond to environmental threats and the teachers did not encourage them to express their needs (Manstead, 2018):

> LM: And you told me you went to boarding school for high school. How was it the same and different from primary school?
> PM: The difference was that there was no parental supervision. We relied on the school principal and some of the teachers as parents. There was no ***(long pause)*** friendly or ***(long pause)*** that this person is a parent and I can relate and talk to them about things that were bothering me. I experienced them as authoritarian parents who were there to make sure that we are in a safe environment. Our needs and what we wanted to do was not open for discussion (Phetogo, middle-class).
>
> There was a lot of emphasise on obedience. There was no encouragement for speaking up for yourself, talking back or seeking clarity. You were only allowed to ask questions about what you were being taught. It was an obedience-driven environment and we didn't see anything wrong with it, that is all we knew (Vuyokazi, middle-class).
>
> The discipline was hard. If you are late and it's winter, ***(interrupts self)*** that teacher was cruel. He would pour you with cold water so you can wear wet clothes the whole day. One day it was raining, so there was a rockery. I don't know why we called it a rockery. Usually, there would be stones around the school. One day, it was raining. She told latecomers to bow down before the rocks in the rain and to pray to the rocks as they would to God. That principal was bad. One day, she made someone walk to the nearest primary school and along the way that person was supposed to shout. I am stupid, I am stupid, I am stupid. The punishments there were cruel. It was very cruel (Mokgadi, working-class).

Some participants, however, pointed out that the use of corporal punishment in schools was aligned with a period where adults adhered to the biblical principle of "spare the rod and spoil the child". In some communities, violence was also used by youngsters to resolve conflict with their peers. Societal changes were responsible for the use of physical violence being denigrated in schools and society. Some participants indicated that being exposed to requirements in other contexts made them aware that the use of physical force was disparaged in other social environments :

> The school was an extension of the home. What was happening at home was the same as at school. We were beaten at home and we were beaten at school. The school and home had the same expectations for students (Relebogile, working-class).
>
> I am thinking about how leadership in high school was designed. In leadership, I think being ***(interrupts self)*** was based on whether you could be a bully or on physique. How strong you look rather than what leadership qualities can you bring to that environment. And I see that when we get into the university system and we are applying for bursaries one of the things they were asking about was the leadership positions that we held. Have you ever been a class rep and all those? Obviously some of us did not have bullying qualities and a strong physique. We would not qualify for those positions. It was disadvantaging us. It was disadvantaging us in terms of bursaries seeing us being good leaders. And consequently, it disadvantages us in the workplace as I still see it in how the leaders in our organizations are behaving (Phetogo, middle-class).
>
> And then the other thing is that back then the punishment ***(in schools)*** was more physical. And then growing up in a village also with peers, it would be that you can't let someone who is your peer disrespect you, especially if it's a guy. If you get to a point where you feel you are being disrespected, you have to do something about it. And you go out there, you come to Gauteng and you try to use force on a person, especially in the workplace. This person has made you really angry and you want to get physical that was considered something bad. One has to learn that it does not work like that anymore (Katlego, middle-class).

7.2.2.2.Hierarchies in the environment

Black African teachers were members of a small black African middle class with the majority of black Africans belonging to the working class (Nzimande, 1991). These teachers were part of the dominant group in their communities and they had the power to impose middle-class standards on working-class school children who could not meet them (Schubert, 2014). These standards were imposed through physical violence, disparaging the children who could not meet standards or by ignoring those who did not belong to the middle class:

> What I can't forget is that we were coming from poor backgrounds. Most of us generally, were coming from very poor families. There was a nurse in the village. The children who would come to school very clean, with neat and pressed school uniforms, polished shoes and socks were children of teachers and nurses. And you know a nice-looking child is lovable ***(laughs).*** Their hair is well combed. The teachers were able to tolerate and guide them. I had a friend, her mother was a nurse. She wasn't very smart. I don't remember her ever being called stupid like other kids. The teachers would look at these children, they are dressed neatly. You could see from how they looked that they had breakfast before they came to school. The teachers liked them but these well-off students were in the tiny minority. The majority were walking to school barefooted. With school uniforms that were not well-pressed. In those days irons were heated using fire and imagine those irons with black soot on white shirts. Those kids were neat and their school books were also neat. They were not only liked by teachers, even our parents would say, look at how neat that child looks. She is better than you. Her white school shirts are white ***(laughs).*** It was funny because we did not have enough soap or washing powder but I needed to look like that child who had those things (Relebogile, working-class).

> LM: What types of students were regarded as good students in your school?
> KM: The good students were the ones who didn't come late. I can't think what you would consider a bad student for a child who is 10 years. But there were kids from much less less privileged homes. They lived a little further from the school and they came a little bit late. I lived literally down the street and I was always on time. So, the ones that come late are put somewhere. They are punished and they have to pick up papers in the schoolyard. Some of them did not do their homework or they did but then they get it wrong. Let's say they live with their grandparents. And their grandparents are not

educated and the homework is not up to the teacher's standard. You are shouted at. You are told you are not doing anything. Not considering other factors that could have a play in a child not doing their homework. You were considered a bad child if you come with unironed school uniform or if it was dirty.
LM: What type of student were you in primary school?
KM: I think I was a good student. My father was strict. Very very strict….My dad would always make sure our homework is done. He would come with these books, I don't know where he got them. He would come with books. He would help us to read. Teach us to read. So, going back to school. Because of the things he valued, thinking that education is important, he is doing his best to get us somewhere. To read outside of school. Also, to communicate in English. I was then considered a good student because of my upbringing or the culture at home. Your homework is done. You study and read. My homework was never behind so the teachers think, you are a good child.
(Khensani, middle-class).

There were incidents where ***(long pause)*** it would be clear, I am not sure if discrimination is the right word but they were treating some learners harshly because of not conforming to what would have been seen as a good learner. For instance, if someone was late to school, it was just a blanket you are late and you deserve to be punished. And the circumstances were not considered. In a rural setting where there were limited schools. For some learners, it was not easy to be on time, sometimes. They stayed far and there was no public transport. They walked to school. And others were crossing a river to come to school. Depending on the level of the water in the river, it was creating problems to be late to school or not even coming to school because the river was full. Then they get punished the next day because they were not at school the previous day. It was seen as that they were delinquents and they did not want to come to school. Another one that also used to happen. As I mentioned earlier in the rural setting there were no men in the community. Some families had cows. There was a regular; I do not remember if it was a weekly or monthly thing. That they take the cows to be disinfected. We used to call the place the dipping where some veterinary surgeon comes to do the dipping of the animals. Now mostly this function was done by boys in the community. Those who had cattle at home. And it was on Thursday that this practice had to be done. Most of them would be absent from school on a Thursday for that. They were punished for not coming to school on Thursday. They said they should prioritize school compared to looking after cattle (Phetogo, middle-class).

MM: Do you remember in 1996/1997, there was an era after the adoption of the constitution where the provinces in South Africa had to be demarcated? They were demarcated into nine provinces. So one of the things that happened was that people were getting used to these nine provinces. Different premiers were then now given to the different provinces. It was a big thing. We had to come to class and discuss who is the premier of each province. Even when you raised your hand to say I have an answer ***(laughs)*** for this thing ***(laughs).*** The person who was going to be chosen was the one who is coming from a better social class. I don't know if you understand what I am saying. If learner A is assumed to be from a perceived higher social class, then that learner is picked. Do you get it?

LM: Yes, I do. A higher social class was equated with higher competence.

MM: And here is the dangerous thing about this. What if the assumption was wrong and that student ***(who was being ignored)*** actually came from a higher social class? You know, that was the nature of it. I have to be honest about one thing, right. There was an odd one or two teachers, the odd one or two teachers, who did not apply that nonsense. That you have to give it to them. But the vast majority did that.

(Mpho, middle-class).

Students in this school system were also ranked according to their academic performance. Students who were underperforming bore the worst brunt of the psychological abuse and corporal punishment that was used to bring students into line in this school system:

LM: What types of students were regarded as good students in the school?

SD: Anyone who mastered Bantu Education and got a 70% mark.

LM: So, it was based on marks?

SD: Yes, there were no sporting facilities or anything like that. Where we can say if they look at you as a good student. They look at you overall.

(Sipho, working-class).

From Grade 1 to Grade 3, the idea of a good student was one who did well. We were all the same and there were no preferences. The one who did well in tests was the favourite. It didn't matter if you were the teacher's child or from a rich family. We were all treated the same. So the idea of a good student was the one who did well (Lethiwe, middle-class).

Teachers, I don't know if our teachers were not taught well at the teachers' college but the teachers could not handle struggling students. They were ridiculed. Children were

> beaten during our time. If you fail, you are corporally punished. If you do not bring your homework, you are corporally punished. You are called stupid in front of other children. They never used to be aware that they were destroying children emotionally. As a result, I know kids who dropped out of school. The way we were corporally punished, if you knew you did not do your homework or you did something that was likely to lead to corporal punishment ***(interrupts self)*** Some children did not come back from lunch breaks and would drop out. Just because of the teachers' way of dealing with struggling students. They would resort to corporal punishment or ridiculing the child. You would be called names in front of other children. Some were not able to hold on and persevere. They ended up dropping out. And that is how most of the teachers were dealing with the students, we had high dropout rates (Relebogile, working-class).

7.2.2.3.Normative culture-specific selves and behavioural pattterns

Black African schools during the apartheid era were expected to enforce the prescripts of the Bantu Education Act. According to Molteno (1984, p.94):

> Bantu Education was designed to control the direction of thought and to delimit the boundaries of knowledge. The National Party aimed to dwarf the minds of African people by conditioning them to servitude. White supremacy would be secured if the product of education were a person who accepts in full the National Party's policy of Apartheid, of white domination and master-servant relationships between black Africans and white people, a person whose highest ambition is to assert the dominance of his tribe over other tribes.

Most black African schools had high student-teacher ratios and inadequate infrastructure (Christie, 1988; Glaser, 2016, 2018). Some participants in this study who attended black African schools noted that teachers in this system were overwhelmed and they preferred obedient students. Obedient students made the job of these teachers easier as they did not disrupt the orderliness of the classroom. Stephens et al. (2014) state that children in working-class schools learn to avoid burdening teachers by asking fewer questions and not approaching teachers when they need help. Furthermore, some schools taught their students

to respect societal hierarchies and there were research participants in this study who were told that they would not achieve success if they did not follow societal rules:

> ***(A good student),*** It was someone who was excelling. Somebody who listens. And I think because they ***(teachers)*** were overloaded and exhausted, there was one primary school in the village, anyone who made their job easier by being an attentive child was a good child. It was also obedience (Noxolo, working-class).

> PM: A good student would be the one who observes the rules. If it is time to wake up, you are up. If it is time to be at the dining hall, you are at the dining hall. If it is time to go to study, you are at study. If you are meant to be at the hostels, you are at the hostels. Just observing the rules is what made you a good student.
> LM: Was there a difference in how the teachers treated the bad students in comparison to the good students?
> PM: In retrospect, yes. The students that were labelled as bad were usually shaped by teachers. The teachers would say you will never be anything in life. Your future is doomed if you continue doing what you are doing.
> LM: To be considered bad, what would you be doing?
> PM: It might be a minor offence. Not being on time at school. We used to dodge. Get out of the school premises and go to the neighbouring village. And if you are caught, you will be told that your lack of respect for rules, you are building yourself failure in your life, you are not going to respect any rules in life. And unfortunately in life you will not succeed.
> (Phetogo, middle-class).

> We used to learn a lot of nursery rhymes. Even now, I don't understand what we were learning these nursery rhymes for. I don't know if we were learning to memorize or what. Our disadvantage is that we went to school during the apartheid era. Even how the curriculum was crafted, it was made to make us the kind of people who lacked. We are where we are. We must be happy and content with that. And this is how God meant it to be. That is how Christianity made us dumb. I have room to understand people who hate Christianity. This situation was created by God. Some are black and some are white. The white ones are superior. This is the kind of situation that God created. Don't question stuff. Leave them as they are, as God made them. If you are a woman, be obedient. If you question, you are disrespectful. What kind of a woman are you? A woman who keeps debating with men. Those things were in our education system. They are not helpful in life. And they are not helpful in our careers (Relebogile, working-class).

Wills (2011) mentions that overcrowding in black African schools led to most teachers promoting rote learning as classes were too big for students to be encouraged to engage in robust debates or for teachers to spend extensive time explaining the logic behind concepts. Mokgadi (working-class) narrated a story to demonstrate how students who thought outside the box were punished for understanding the logic behind the concepts that they were being taught. Her other story also demonstrates that the message of not standing out was further reinforced at home and by others in the community:

> One day, I was in Form 3 ***(Grade 10),*** they ***(the class)*** did maths. There was a problem after two weeks she ***(the teacher)*** repeated the same problem on the board. I knew it exactly 1,2,3 up to the solution. And that day she repeated it on the board and said write this. All of them wrote what she wrote on the board. I knew what they were doing was wrong. We had done the problem previously. I did it exactly the correct way and sent it to her. Because of poverty, I used to have sores. These sores that are related to poverty. That time I had a big sore on my face and it was very painful. I didn't have money to go to the clinic and I was going to school with this pain. They started to submit and the teacher said correct, correct, correct. I went to submit and I was the only one who gave an answer that the teacher thought was wrong. Everybody was correct. I don't talk much when I know things. Even now in my work, I don't show much when I know. I don't show off. I don't talk back and say this is right. She slapped me across the face directly on the sore. The sore burst and there was blood and puss all over her hand. She slapped me again. I didn't cry, I knew I was correct. And I went outside to the tap, sat down and cleaned my face. She started to do the sum. With the first statement, I knew she was going to come to my solution. The solution was exactly my sum and I just looked at her. I was the only person who was given this slap. And then she apologized. I just took my books and left with my torn uniform. I left the class for the day. I was right and now she started to beat the whole class. But I knew I was right.
>
> There was another incident that stood out to me. There was a question that the whole class got wrong. This person ***(classmate)*** who was much older than me kept asking me how come I was the only person who got the question right. Alone, in the whole class. I said I don't know. He said how come you were the only person who got 100%. I said maybe it is because I knew all the answers and he said how come? He kept on saying I want to know how come? You are suspicious ***(laughs).*** He wanted to blame me and say I

> was using witchcraft. That is what he was trying to do, saying how come? How come? I asked him why do you keep emphasising this. That night when I told my aunt she said every time that you write a test make sure that you don't get 100%. Get 98% or get 95%. Why, but I said, I know everything. She said they will kill you. They will bewitch you and you will die ***(laughs).***

Some participants, however, indicated that there were teachers in their schools who tried to move away from rote learning. These teachers exposed students to information that was beyond what was specified in the school curriculum or they demonstrated the concepts in the textbook practically:

> In high school, there was still corporal punishment. But some teachers were more transformed. They had joined the teaching profession in later years. They had better methods of teaching. They did not always resort to corporal punishment. They tried to go the extra mile. To make children better understand and to give them different exposure. They would say, you don't know what a restaurant is and we would have an excursion to town. We started having school excursions. The exposure was not much but they wanted to take us out of the village to an environment where you can see something that you can learn. You don't only learn from a book about a restaurant but you can also visit a restaurant. So the method of teaching was no longer, cram this or get beaten. At least, they tried to give you exposure so that you could get a broader understanding of education (Relebogile, working-class).

> In Form 2 ***(Grade 9),*** we had a new principal. Her punishments were completely different from those of the ones who were there initially. She liked education. She was able to recognize my talent. She would come with a Sunday newspaper and give it to me to read. I would read it the whole week and the following week she would bring another one. She used to give them to the class. Some didn't want them. Boys used to smoke with them. She realized that I liked reading. She came with this bundle of newspapers and I started to read (Mokgadi, working-class).

Other participants further indicated that their school environments taught them or reinforced what they were taught at home that the collective image of the community or the welfare of the group superseded their individual needs (Stephens et al., 2014):

> In terms of relations with other learners, it was also enlightening. We came from different backgrounds. Some kids came from wealthy families and others came from families who were relatively at the poverty level. But that was not an issue that we considered in our relations. We all had communal relations. The boarding school was providing food but there were extras that we would bring for our consumption in the evenings. What we will do is club together, form groups and eat together. Now that group was not formed based on the quantity of food you could bring to the group. Whatever you have, you bring in and you share. It was equal consumption but your bringing was not equal. It was not an issue that you are eating more than what you brought. And that to me was an important learning curve to see that sometimes it is not what you bring but that you can help the other person as well. Have a life in which we can all be happy. Irrespective of what you bring. It should not be about what one has and the other does not have. So the experience I learnt I still cherish that (Phetogo, middle-class).

> When I was going to debates and the like, someone would lend me shoes. It was a sense of belonging. That was one of the things that I learnt. If you have shoes, you loan them. If you have a shirt, you loan the other one who doesn't have a shirt. So that when you go out, it is about all of us in the village. Or all of us in the school, it is not about you alone (Mokgadi, working-class).

7.2.3. Black African Students and Multiracial Teachers

7.2.3.1. Sociocultural context

Participants in this study who attended schools with a majority of black African students and multiracial or white teachers went to schools that were privately owned and established in the post-apartheid era, historically white government schools that had over time started having middle-class black African students as the majority or they studied at privately run missionary schools that the Catholic church had kept during the apartheid era (Christie & Collins, 1982) :

I went to a Catholic school. In primary and high school, I was taught by Americans, Irish, and Australians. South African teachers were black ***(Africans).*** There were white missionaries and nuns (Thabang, middle-class).

The high school that I went to as previously indicated had a lot of historical church involvement, so there was a lot of white involvement. Not a lot of white people, sorry, but some white people. And at some point, we had white volunteers from America teaching us. The school was not affluent but time and again, there were white people there from different walks of life-Belgium, Netherlands, America and you mention it. In high school, we were used to engaging with white teachers but there were no white learners (Mpho, middle-class).

LM: How was primary school different to high school?
KM: I moved from a government school to a white school. Now I am taught by white teachers. For me, it was an adjustment. I was not used to being taught by white people. I am also a bit reserved. I am not sure if I am doing the right things. But the difference in the school cultures is that in primary school there wasn't anyone to push you. You have homework. You do it, good. If you don't do it, you are a bad child. There aren't any further steps that are taken by the teachers that you do your work. Maybe you just didn't understand. When I got to high school, I found a difference. There was a lot of homework, first of all. The adjustment was that, I don't know how true was that, but the teachers wanted to see you do well. They pushed, but if you don't do your work, but we hardly had students who were not doing their work. The teaching, the way they taught was in a way that they make sure that we understand. We would have extra classes. That was more how things were at home. That is how my dad pushed us. Made sure we study and we read.
(Khensani, middle-class).

LM: So, they cared about you as students?
LK: They did care. Because at some point, our classes were very small. They used to invite the whole class to the teacher's private house to watch a movie and they would have water slides. The teacher lived in town and now that I think about it, I find it odd (***laughs)***
LM: Why was it odd ***(laughs)***?
LK: I hear stories now that the lady who started the school, she was a white lady, what she experienced. Her husband divorced her because she was teaching black ***(African)***

> kids. And she was getting a lot of headaches from her community I would say for catering for these black kids.
> LM: So, she suffered a lot to teach you guys?
> LK: Yeah, to keep and to grow the school and become affiliated with a popular brand of schools.
> (Lethabo, middle-class).

Schools in this context provided educational opportunities that were lacking in black African schools and they also did not have racial hierarchies that were prevalent in multiracial schools. Research participants who attended this school system spoke highly of their schools. They indicated that the school environment was nurturing:

> Primary school A was amazing. The primary school was all black ***(Africans)*** with white teachers naturally and one or two blacks ***(Africans).*** It was that place where we were crazy. Primary school A was a place where the kids were crazy. Funny enough, we excelled even though we were crazy. It was a place that was easy. I loved primary school A. It was a place where we thrived. We thrived amongst each other. Because we all looked alike. There was no like, this one is like this because they are white. Primary school A was just that place where we were all equal. We looked the same, we sounded the same, we laughed at each other and we were naughty. There was no quorum (Thato, middle-class).

> I don't know if it was the school that was different or me, just growing up. In high school, I was more confident, I felt I knew myself more. Funny enough, there were fewer white people. I don't know if it had anything to do with it. It was also an only-girls school. I don't know if there are correlations there…. maybe it was because there were many of us, who were black ***(Black African, Indian and Coloured).*** They had more confidence in us ***(Black people)***. We were one type of people ***(laughs)***. Even a teacher who would come, if they wanted to start a race thing, it wouldn't work at the school. We were mostly black (Reitumetse, middle-class).

The school environment was perceived by most participants in this study to have been safe and students in this school system were rewarded for displaying excellence. Students were motivated through a reward system. Some participants in this study also indicated that the

schools that they had attended were still trying to figure out the best ways to discipline students who were not following rules:

> With Catholics you get the scores, you get the awards. You get the scores, you get the awards. You don't get the scores, you don't get the awards. If you don't get the scores, you don't get awards. If you are an extreme problem-maker, they show you the door (Thabang, middle-class).

> If you were clever that was actually celebrated. I enjoyed a lot of celebrity status, especially from the educators. As well as from a majority of senior people. It was the culture of that place. People who were doing well were celebrated. Teachers celebrated those people. Also, there was a lot of celebration for people who were doing well in sports, soccer. People were idolized and celebrated a lot if they were doing well in soccer (Mpho, middle-class).

> My primary school was still trying to find itself because it was building itself. Even the bad students were not put in detention. They would be halfway through detention and they would feel sorry for them. They were not too harsh, that if you do something bad you will go to detention or you would stay in class when everybody has gone on a break. If the intention was to punish, the teachers never followed through (Lethabo, middle-class).

> When I arrived at that school. That was around the time corporal punishment was nearly non-existent. That thing ***(the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools),*** tricked a lot of educators because they did not know how to punish naughty students. As much as the school was a boarding school, it was not an affluent boarding school. And in the behaviour and the manner of doing things. In the past, there were a lot of international or Model C ways of doing things which could have come with missionaries. Those things over time could have dissipated. There was no clear way of knowing what you do with people who were naughty and not following rules. There was no clear way of knowing what to do. …. I think one of the things that they would do is say get out of the class. You can't beat. You can't do one of these things called detentions that are happening in the former model C schools. So I think in the classroom environment that was basically what would happen (Mpho, middle-class).

7.2.3.2.Normative culture- specific selves and behavioral patterns

Schools with black African students and multiracial teachers expected students to obey school rules. Research participants in this study further indicated that they were expected to meet high standards but school authorities expressed confidence that they could achieve these set standards:

> ***(A good student),*** In primary school, those who toed the line and respected the school rules. Went the extra mile with school work or something that was happening at school (Lethabo, middle-class).

> LM: What types of students were regarded as good students when you were in primary school?
> TT: Students who adhered to principles. Students who showed good behaviour. Students who wanted to be model citizens.
> LM: That is students who followed rules. May you please expand on your definition of a model citizen?
> TT: Somebody that when you meet years down the line, they have achieved a lot. Somebody you can be proud of. Like I know Lerato, we went to school together (Thabang, middle-class).

> But I found that the school was good at that time, we had a harsh school principal. And we all used to hate her. But we now realize that she made the school what it was. But, we did get a lot of opportunities. We were involved in sports leagues; the world was your oyster at that school. It was up to you what you wanted to do in that school… They ***(the school)*** were more supportive if you were having challenges. They were not about writing you off. They encouraged students to do higher grade which I noticed most schools don't do. At that time we were young, we didn't know, but we knew that, but we didn't understand the education system. I like that culture of driving people to have university entrances. They also emphasised that even if you do not want to go to university, get a university entrance. Just in case you want to do something else, I like them for that. I like them for encouraging us and supporting us, especially toward the end of high school (Reitumetse, middle-class).

Some schools in this environment further encouraged students to connect based on their competence levels. Students with high levels of competence could close off their activities by only associating with those who had the potential to enhance the collective capital owned by their group (Bourdieu, 1986). Furthermore, students were encouraged to respect only those who were high-achievers or who demonstrated behaviour that was associated with being a model citizen:

> Catholicism inculcated individualism. There was no collectivism. Individualism was probably the best thing that I have found… It is about you first and teamwork comes later…..Let's say we have soccer players. We have Lerato as a striker. The first thing we have to ask is, is Lerato a good striker? Is Lerato a good player? What has she achieved as an individual? Before we can even talk about you joining the team (Thabang, middle-class).

> At school, they would say you must respect someone who has earned your respect and at home it was unconditional. Elders have to be respected. Certain types of people have to be respected. A chief has to be respected. No matter what they do, even if you find out that they are doing something untoward, you still have to respect them. In school, they promote respect for the teacher. At the same time, they would tell you that a security guard who speaks to you in a way that you do not like does not deserve respect. It would be kind of hypocritical in a way (Katlego, middle-class).

7.2.4. Multiracial Schools

7.2.4.1. Sociocultural context

A majority of schools in this context had a multiracial student population that was being taught mostly by white teachers . Multiracial schools are better resourced when compared to schools in other school contexts (Van der Berg & Hofmeyr, 2018). Research participants in this study who had attended multiracial schools indicated that these schools were very clear on what they stood for and the values that they wanted their students to display. Some

participants in this study perceived that doctrines promoted in different schools impinged on their individuality:

> I started school in Belgium and then went to three different primary schools in South Africa. I would say a lot of them did not promote freedom of expression or individuality. Their focus was teaching in a certain way. Expecting students to conform to that. That was the thing that was similar with all of them. You sort of lose your individuality quite soon. You get into a system of how things should or should not work. Those were the similarities. The differences, the differences, I can think of ***(long pause)*** because the one school was a government school but predominately Jewish. Funny enough, I went to a Christian one as well. The Jewish one was pro-Jewish, even in the education system knowing ***(interrupts self)*** almost indoctrination now that I think about it. Teaching young children about the world war and the holocaust. Things I would not know if I was in a mainstream school. So I think the difference there was that I was indoctrinated as a Jewish person. Adhering to Jewish holidays when it was not a national holiday. Having to conform to that. With the Christian one, we had to conform to a Catholic way of doing things as well. So, it was directly from the Jewish school to the Christian school. I did not have a break. So it was a culture shock. How things were different in different schools and how they put religion ahead of education. (Reitumetse, middle-class).

> School A was less rigid than School B. You could find your identity. You were not forced to be academic. There are different ways to learn, right? Some kids excelled at sports but not academics, but they were not seen as bad students. But in School B, you would have been. You had to balance academics and sports, and you had to excel at both. At School A, it was what are your strengths? Who are you? What do you want to become? And then let's try and mould you in a different way to actually reach that (Banthatile, middle-class).

> First of all, we are wearing a dungaree with an ugly colour. You are wearing teaspoon shoes ***(laughs).*** It was such a funny thing. And then you have white people and now it's multiracial. You have an assembly every day. At primary school A, we had an assembly once a week. Now there is assembly every day and now there are different things to consider. How people are Jehovah's witnesses and they do not attend these things. Now you are more mindful of the culture of different things and different people. Now there are special classes at school. I did not know such things existed. I don't know how school A was able to help the weaker guys. But primary school B had special classes for them. You have white teachers, each one is different. The typical multiracial school, there are

> coconuts. Now you are dealing with this coconut life and you say guys we did not have this at primary school A. At primary school A, there was reading English and everyday English. Reading English was everything at School B (Thato, middle-class).

The school environment in multiracial schools was more predictable as most research participants in this study could explicitly explain the disciplinary system in their schools. These participants were able to indicate what type of behaviours were punishable in their schools and the sanction for each behaviour. Some research participants in this study could also explicitly explain the reward system used in their schools:

> You would get detention and demerit points. If you had six demerit points you would go to detention. If you get 30 points, they would expel you from the school (Noxolo, working-class).

> The high school did not have detention. They used a warning system. We got slips. I was always late. I became a habitually late person eventually. What they would do is close the gate. They would give us yellow slips. Then they called my mom, that your child is late. That was another form of discipline. Then there was a time they took us to the principal's office and he shouted at us. I don't remember for what (Thato, middle-class).

> Generally they ***(good students)*** were awarded with ***(interrupts self),*** they ***(School)*** had a merit system. Each student had a book. If you do something good and if the teachers are impressed with your behaviour they will give you a merit. You had twenty lines and once you get twenty merits from different teachers. Obviously, these teachers had to sign. Once you get twenty merits, they will give you a certificate in front of the whole school during assembly. You were rewarded for good behaviour (Phillip, middle-class).

The predictability of the punishments in this school system contradicted the randomness with which punishment was sometimes meted out in black African schools:

> They expected excellence from us. You would get 99% and you will be beaten because they ***(teachers)*** asked you, who do you think is going to get that 1% that you missed ***(laughs)***? (Vuyokazi, middle-class).

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> I remember in Standard 2 ***(Grade 4).*** I was never ever ever beaten in class. I could say I was a very good student. I never made noise in class. When you did not get a total or got answers wrong, they used to beat them. I used to make sure that I get all the answers right. I remember I was beaten. It was one time when I was in Standard 2 ***(Grade 4).*** A boy who was in Standard 3 ***(Grade 5)*** wrote me a letter. And they beat me for that. The boy wrote to me. We were three girls. I was staying with my aunt and the other girls were also staying with their aunts. And we were related. We used to be babysitters in those families. We used to do everything together because we were coming from the same clan. Out of nowhere, the boys wrote to us. The letters were discovered by the teachers. Those teachers went on us and beat us. Ever since that day, I hate those teachers. Even today, I still don't greet them. My brother from my other aunt was asking the teachers why are you beating them? They didn't write letters to themselves. Why don't you beat those who wrote the letters? We didn't even receive the letters but we were beaten because boys wrote letters to us. How were we involved? (Mokgadi, working-class)

Stories about verbal insults or corporal punishment were uncharacteristic of the multiracial school system. Lethabo (middle-class) was the only research participant in this study who indicated that some teachers in her school used verbal insults to discipline bad students:

> They ***(bad students)*** were often sidelined by the teachers now that I think about it. Even the ***(interrupts self)*** they were just mocked. The students would accept that I am being mocked about this and why should I try to be the opposite. I am known as a loser so I am just going to be a loser. They made the students feel bad for whatever behaviours they may have displayed. They gave detention but sometimes it was verbal insults. They would say mean and hurtful things and if the child was not strong, it will keep playing in their minds for a while and let that define them or something like that. There was this other student who was very funny. There was this one teacher who would pick on him. He would say you are very ugly. You mustn't consider anything and the comments had nothing to do with his marks. It was just picking on somebody. Although he was relatively a tougher person and he didn't let that affect him.

7.2.4.2. Hierarchies in the environment

Some multiracial schools required students to excel both academically and in extra-mural activities whereas other schools only focused on academic excellence. Students in this school system were also expected to display appropriate conduct:

> They defined ***(good students)*** by their marks. How well they did academically. As well as in sports and cultural activities that they would take part in (Lethabo, middle-class).
>
> ***(Good student)*** Good grades, playing sports and not getting into trouble. Not getting into trouble. No noisemaking all those kind of things (Thami, middle-class).
>
> A good student was always the one with the highest marks. They seem to not have cared about accolades and achievements as an individual. Focus was just on marks. Academia and obviously they were easy to praise and build admiration for students who were performing better than others. Mostly, it was academics. With the Catholic school, we had other exposure like ballet and going to competing schools regarding tennis or whatever. So they were open to an extra-mural, but most important was academics (Reitumetse, middle-class).

In this school system, individual excellence was not the only criterion that put students at the top of the school hierarchy. Research participants in this study indicated that the economic capital of parents also contributed to students being put at the top of the school hierarchy. Students were treated more favourably if they had parents who could contribute toward enhancing the image of a school. Students who did not have sufficient economic capital also struggled to be part of this system:

> First thing was, you know I went to primary school A. ….. I learnt that when you are liked is because you are good at something. I then went to primary school B which had white students, oh my gosh, the shocking horror of life. Understanding that your parents still need to be rich for you to be liked. That was a horrible adjustment (Thato, middle-class).

We can always go back to the example, at the Catholic school ….. if your parents are contributing, or your parents are active in school, regardless of your behaviour, you are like ***(interrupts self)*** there was a clique. And obviously, there was ***(a disciplinary)*** system in place like it was supposed to be. But in reality, I think there were still playing favourites (Banthatile, middle-class).

LM: What types of students were not doing well in this system?
PB: I think when you analyse it a bit; it is the students who came from struggling backgrounds. Whether financially or with parents going through a divorce. Or no proper support structure at home. They struggled and they could not relate to anything or with other students. People who felt that the whole world was against them.
LM: Was it a class-conscious school? I can understand the emotions associated with divorce. Why was the financial stuff important?
PB: The financial part is basically ***(interrupts self)***, you might find that your parents want you to go to a good school but at the end of the day, they can't afford it. Yes, they can afford to pay your school fees. But they can't afford to do other things. For example, you have two sons. You can pay school fees but maybe they want to do extra murals. They want to focus on soccer. You can't afford to buy the equipment. Soccer boots or not being able to attend some of their events or matches. Those kinds of things.
(Phillip, middle-class).

Multiracial schools also had few or no black African teachers and the most dominant positions in this system were occupied by white people. Research participants who attended multiracial schools had different experiences at these schools. Some participants indicated that the racial hierarchies in their schools did not disadvantage them. The schools that they went to treated students across all racial groups the same:

Well for me when I went to the predominately white school it was more or less the same at that time. At that time it was 94 or 95. So there was still a bit of ***(interrupts self***) the treatment was sort of, how do I put it, trying not to show any discrimination. I would say more or less the same. I was not treated special and I was not racially profiled (Thami, middle-class).

It was a multiracial school. The majority were white people but it was a school that accommodated everyone's racial or cultural needs. They accommodated everyone. I

> went to that school not knowing English and Afrikaans. I was taught Afrikaans after school. They had a special class just for me to teach me Afrikaans. After each lesson, they would drop me at home. The teacher went out of her way to make sure I learnt because I was coming from a foreign country (Phillip, middle-class).

> I had the best two years of my school life . And, it was at School A. School A was semi-private. Private, like the one before, and it was co-education. So there were boys. And not Catholic, but they were Protestant. People there were real, they just didn't pretend. If the teacher didn't like you, they didn't like you, even the students. So I think the thing with School B is they were trying to make us perfect little girls, but there were flaws. Because it's hard to do your best with someone when you don't like them. With School A, when you know what the rules are, there is no pretence. So it's actually more mature. So actually the teachers showed where they stood with the students. It was authentic. Funny enough, for me specifically, I didn't encounter issues with the teachers I actually loved the teachers that I had. I even enjoyed the uncomfortable conversations I had with my fellow students, because they asked the questions that were on their minds unlike the school before. So proper, you didn't ask the question that were on your mind. But if this, if people don't actually understand something about black people, they'll ask you, and I thought that was authentic. And I think in that two years, I learned more about myself than I did in the 10 years at the other school (Banthatile, middle-class).

Other participants who attended multiracial schools stated that this school system subtly introduced the idea that being black African was not good enough. This message was communicated through racialized hierarchical structures that existed in the environment. Black African children in this school system had less exposure to black Africans who were in positions of power. Furthermore, some schools did not want black African cultures to seep into their school environments. According to Urson and Kessi (2018), there is a racialised cultural repertoire in South Africa that presents the Africanization of historically white institutions as lowering standards in these institutions. The expectation in most of these settings is for black African students to assimilate into western culture (Urson & Kessi, 2018). Some participants in this study were not allowed to speak African languages on school

premises, they way they spoke English was scrutinized and some schools refused to include black African languages in their curriculum:

> There was a point in high school when former Model Cs didn't have an appetite to cater for an African language as a second language option. During that time, my dad was on the School Governing Body ***(SGB)*** and he was questioning and saying students should be allowed to take an African language as a second language option. At that time, it was frowned upon me and the white teachers frowned upon my dad's pushback on an African language as an option. That also disadvantaged me because now I wish I knew my language. I was studying Afrikaans which is not part of my identity. I think what worked against me was receiving pushback from the teachers indirectly. They would say your dad is on the SGB and he is fighting to get an African language on the school's programme like you are part of the problem. But that is normal. Isn't that supposed to be normal? (Lethabo, middle-class).

> I think perfection sometimes leads people to imperfection, excellence is you doing the best you can. Measurements may not necessarily be coming up with measurements. And I think that was a little bit unrealistic because you're judged on whether you speak in a certain way, right? Speak in a certain way, so they actually judge you according to your upbringing because even an Afrikaans child never speaks English with an English accent. They still have a very Afrikaans accent when they speak English. But for whatever reason, we were judged on how we spoke. You have to become something that you are asked to be, to fit in, you could not come as you were (Banthatile, middle-class).

> In a world where blackness is crushed everyday, it is necessary that they ***(black African children)*** see blackness in a positive light….What people underestimate, what people take for granted is having a teacher who can pronounce your name properly. A teacher who has a similar background. That does wonders for a child. Having a child see leadership looking like them. There is a confidence that they have. That is what my kid takes from his current school. We take for granted what leadership looking like you gives you and I never had that. That is me thinking out loud. My son does not understand the calibre of leaders that he has at his school. To have a ***(black African)*** maths boffin teaching him. That woman is smart and she is the head of schools. And to have that calibre. I tell him you don't understand now but one day you will understand. To have the owner of the school come in with different cars, he'll come with a Rolls Royce and he will come with another car. What it does for the kids, my son loves cars. He would say mum he came with this car. He is looking at a black ***(African)*** person driving the car of

> his dreams. Psychologically you can never buy what that does. You are looking at ***(interrupts self)***, people who teach the kids have a degree minimum. They are coming from a starting place where they have excelled. Already to have someone pronounce your name correctly and not frown. To not have conversations about hair. Your hair looks like this and why it does not look like this? At school B, they would talk about hair and you would think is hair an issue? Guys, is hair an issue, really hair ***(laughs)?***And there are policies around hair. I know hair was a big thing for me at school. My child cannot be called into an office to discuss hair. The English in class, let's speak English in class. No guys, English is one of the 11 languages and if you don't know the others it's not our fault. (Thato, middle-class).

In other schools, racial hierarchies were maintained overtly and some research participants in the current study indicated that they experienced name-calling and witnessed preferential treatment being given to students who were members of the dominant racial group:

> In high school, you could sense that some of the Afrikaner teachers were a bit discriminatory. If they send you to the teacher's kitchen. When you get to the kitchen they will call you names such as you baboon. You could also see there was a bit of discrimination. White students used to stick together and black students together. You could sense that there is still racism. The students chose to group themselves according to race but with the teachers, you could sense the discrimination (Lebohang, working-class).

> In Grade 8 when I got there ***(interrupts self)*** the problem was, it was a former Afrikaans school. I first have to state it like that. Now they were transitioning into the whites, the blacks, the English section of things. So, my first experience. Someone is spitting on my stuff. And you are like what the hell and you are told it is a mistake. He is told to wipe it and whatever. For me, it was like okay. Then you had teachers that were generally okay and you had teachers that had a preference toward the Afrikaans side. What irritated me about that specific school was when it came to leadership, some of us would be in your top 10. We are both cultural and academic. Then they realize they need to pick from this selection of people for leadership positions. Then they brought in other people. They brought in Afrikaans kids with a promise of putting them in leadership positions. That is when I lost it. What is the point of us thriving ***(pause)*** academically? When leadership positions come we are not even going to be considered…They were not going to have a black head girl or a black head boy. Those were set for the white ***(interrupts self)*** Afrikaans kids. Even if you were greater academically and socially. That was not for us at

the time. Only in, let me tell you, three or four years ago. They had their first black (***African)*** head girl. It was a big thing. And I graduated in 2005. I wanted to meet that girl because chances are that she was excellence personified. Yes, it was like that…..How to describe the high school, it was a typical Afrikaans high school. Typical, typical ***(with emphasis)…..*** it took me a while to forgive white people and get used to them again after that (Thato, middle-class).

Can I share an example of why it was difficult in high school. I am a person who likes laughing a lot. The high school that I went to was predominately Indian. If you went into that environment as a black ***(African)*** child, you must know your place. The things that an Indian child can get away with, you cannot get away with. So, you laugh when it's time to laugh. You don't laugh unless everybody else is laughing. When you laugh, and you find something funny, and you are the only one laughing. It's a big problem. I was made to sit right at the back with a couple of my friends. You see the setup but nobody tells you. It's the Indian children at the front, the black ***(African)*** people at the back and in the middle, you will find a mix. That is where you belong. Nobody told you but you could see. In Economics class, I was made to sit at the back. I sat at the front and I was told to sit at the back. There was a very smart Indian boy who always got the highest marks in tests and exams. It was only when I got the highest mark that the teacher wanted to know who Lethiwe was. So they used my English name to call me and asked who this person is. It tells you that they didn't care who I was until I did something that was out of the ordinary and I was called to come again and sit in the front. It was only because they thought that I was cheating. Being at the back meant that it was wrong. I had an opportunity to cheat and I was brought to sit in the front (Lethiwe, middle-class).

7.2.4.3.Normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns

Multiracial schools and black African schools with multiracial teachers endowed research participants with cultural abilities to interact with people from different race groups. Research participants who had attended multiracial schools from a young age also acquired the cultural capital that is valued in institutions dominated by white people. These participants learnt to embody the dispositions valued in western contexts and in this study being able to speak English without a heavy black African accent was the signal most gatekeepers used in

organizations dominated by white people to assess organizational fit. The euphemisms used by participants in the current study to describe speaking English without a black African accent included speaking well, being able to communicate or using reading English. Meghji (2017) also found that research participants in her study who spoke English without their native accents were deemed as people who spoke properly when in white-dominated contexts:

> LM: High school, how was it the same or different from primary school?
> PB: Very different. It was an all-boys school. It was a different kind of setting. But it was a place where they taught us how to become men. So, how to be responsible.
> LM: Can you please expand on that. What do you mean when you say they taught you how to become men? What kind of things make a man?
> PB: First is the dress code. We were taught to wear blazers no matter how hot it was. You had to wear your blazer and have your tie properly made. As you are growing up, you develop a beard and facial hair. You had to shave. They would not allow you to come to school with a beard and unshaven. You had to look smart and presentable all the time. You were taught manners. When someone is greeting you don't sit down. You stand up and you shake their hand. When an adult person goes by on the school premises, you stand up and greet them. It helps you in society with how to carry yourself. Sometimes you were taught things that go against your cultural beliefs. When you were young you were taught that to be a man you needed to go to the mountain ***(initiation school).*** But it is not about that. But at school, it is not about that. It is about how you conduct yourself as an individual. It helps you to develop and get to know yourself better.
> (Phillip, middle-class).

> LM: Just looking at your school life, what lessons did you learn that were helpful in your career?
> TK: Firstly, the reading English. You get into interviews and they assume that because you speak well, you are acclimatized to the white people and their ways. Because in the interview of my learnership, they asked me who paid for my fees. And I thought since when do they ask in interviews about, is it NSFAS. I don't know if they wanted to check if I was the poor black, the middle black or the richer black. The one interview they spoke about my English and how well I speak. I thought guys, this is how I speak. The background and in terms of the different teachers that we had. They emphasized different things. It did stand me well in interviews later in life. The exposure to excellence stands

you in good stead. The exposure to white people, realizing this is how white people are. Later you are also able to capitalize on different things because you know them. (Thato, middle-class).

The high school itself did not have white students but in terms of the structures. Time and again, there will be white people and I had engaged with them. So that became a selling point in the workplace. When I looked at it, I started to realize that there were people who had even gone to schools where they were interacting with white people from a young age. It can be good or bad. If you went to school where you started interacting with white people at a young age. You can start behaving like a white person. You assimilate, you are black but you become white. You are unaware that you have become white. So that thing is good. When you go into the workplace, you are white but you don't know that you are white. You are seen as white and it is fine. You are one of them. But that thing as much as it helps you in the workplace is a negative as well. The moment you realize that you are black and not white, you start to have challenges. And some of them are going to be in the workplace and others are going to be outside the workplace. I did not become white because I went to a school that was black. And I did have elements of knowing how to relate to white people and issues like that. Not being shy to interact with them that was the element (Mpho, middle-class).

7.3. HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

7.3.1. Sociocultural Context

Tertiary institutions are located in the education system and they occupy different positions on this hierarchy (Calhoun, 2003). Some institutions are perceived to be more reputable than others:

It was a predominately a coloured and black ***(African)*** university. It was racially mixed. It was too big to look at the cultural aspects of it. But it was a mixture of the two. It was obviously sitting in the shadow of another university that is based in the Western Cape (Thami, middle-class, multiple schools).

Research participants in the current study further mentioned that tertiary institutions had different resources based on the position that they occupied in the education system. Historically white institutions had an abundance of resources whereas historically black African institutions had limited resources:

> For my undergraduate degree, I went to a rural university if I could put it like that. It was in the rural areas of Kwazulu Natal. So, it had good lecturers, predominately black ***(African).*** Life on campus ***(interrupts self)*** although it was different from life in high school. You were on campus the whole day. It was nothing out of the ordinary. I was still surrounded by the same people that I have been with since high school. Later on, when I moved to a more urban university, it was different. Mixed race for the first time. Resources are in abundance in urban areas than in the rural university. For instance, if you do assignments. You go to one lab that has a minimum number of computers. You could spend three hours just waiting in the queue to use the computer to do your assignment. Mostly, you had to do them at night when people are sleeping because you are from a disadvantaged background. Others had laptops, but I didn't have one. It meant I had to go to the lab and do assignments. Do my research and that was mostly in the evenings because during the day it always full and you could never get space. Whereas in the urban university you are guaranteed that anytime you will get access to a computer (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools).

> I went to a university called University A which was an apartheid university. It was one of those that were meant to produce school teachers. And whoever else will produce administration for the government. The learning material there was developed centrally and we didn't have a lot of professors. I started to experience a lot of professors when we got to University B. Most lecturers had an Honours degree when I was at the university at the time. Most of them were students doing their Masters's degrees. It was in the township. Highly qualified academics could not have risked their lives and driven to township A. It was also not known for academic excellence. Because I had the lowest level of university entrance. It was probably the only university that was willing to accommodate a low-quality student. When I say low quality given the environment itself. It's low quality if you had to compare me to someone who went to a multiracial school. They ***(the university)*** would take people who had a school leaving pass. They were willing to take those students. They gave us a chance and they would say do a one year-programme and if you do well, they would put you in a degree programme. That is how I got to go to university. I did not attain a school leaving pass but under normal

> circumstances, my qualification would not have made it to university (Sipho, working-class, black African schools).

Participants in this study who completed their tertiary education whilst working studied at private or public long-distance universities or colleges. There were long-distance institutions where students had no contact with members of the academic staff, institutions that offered Saturday or evening classes and also institutions that had block classes where students could meet each other and members of the academic staff:

> It is difficult to explain the culture of that environment. It was a completely long-distance environment. Unlike when I was doing my Masters, we had block lectures. I cannot say what the culture of University A was, it was completely long-distance. No contact with lecturers. You received your study material in the post. You wrote your assignments and sent them back by post. You would get the assignments with feedback by post. University B was distant but twice a year, we would have block sessions. The culture was different. I was able to interact with students who were doing the same course. Most of the people were doing this whilst working elsewhere. It broadened your learning because as you have these discussions you begin to visualize things from other work environments. The learning becomes more practical and broadened. The benefit of the block sessions was not that you would get a lecturer who would give you lessons but the interaction with other students were more beneficial. Because they came from different work environments (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools).

> My first degree, I actually initially registered with public University A. And I tried to take as many subjects as possible as a first-year, and they kept on adding new subjects. Every time I've finished six subjects, there are two new subjects and I was like no way. So I reached out to privately-owned University B. And they had exactly the same degree. And I reached out to University B and said I've done a year and a half with University A. I would like to transfer to your institution, and they landed up crediting me the whole of the first year and half of the second year. That's how many courses I had already taken. And so basically, I just did a year and a half. I did quite well there. With University A, I found it hard. I went to classes. They had Saturday classes but the classes were so big. If you had an issue, not everybody's questions were answered. But at University B, they made sure that they capped it. You cannot have more than this ***(number of students)***. When you have an issue, you can send a message to the lecturer and they will get back to you.

> Whilst at University A, the lecturer had too many students and could not give them attention. The setups were very different. So I found at University B, I could go through the syllabus really quickly. And the extra material or the extra references that they gave, you could go and do your own research and stuff like that. I had a good experience at University B (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools).

There were also research participants in this study who studied at universities that were based in first-world countries. These participants indicated that these universities were more academically intensive when compared to local universities. Thus, some of the participants who studied at international universities stated that they were better versed with their academic field when compared to those who studied in South Africa. Furthermore, international universities exposed the research participants in this study to contexts that were not based on racial hierarchies prevalent in South Africa:

> University B was a university in the UK. I never knew how easy it is for international students to study outside the country than local students. International students pay way more than local students. The lecturers and everybody go out of their way to support you and to ensure that you do not fail. The diversity of the class. There were 26 students and 14 were from different countries. The richness of our discussions. That was fascinating. I didn't live on campus because I was married and went with my husband. I had just gotten married and I had to live off-campus. But just enjoying that experience of being on campus during the day and being able to escape from campus and experience the normal life of the city. Being plugged-in, in a local church. I even had a job being an administrator for local midwives. It was a beautiful cultural experience and international exposure for me. I came from a university where lecturers would brag about the number of students who failed their course. To be in an environment where lecturers go all out to provide you with all kinds of resources that you do not fail. That was a beautiful pleasant surprise for me (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools).

> It was cut-throat. You have to be exceptional. You get well-cooked. They expected top-quality. The stuff that I am doing here, an ordinary Professor would not be able to handle in South Africa. They won't, they are just not good enough (Thabang, middle-class, black students-multiracial teachers).

> There was an influential academic who was a guest lecturer in 2005. I wanted to do my PhD in South Africa. This lecture changed my whole life. He said he does not want us to study abroad but to live abroad for six months or one year. He said you will come back with a blended mind that withstands the context where you are. Throughout that time I thought of going abroad. I have a letter that I wrote to these people that I did not know. I just heard about this man and woman and said I am a South African. I need a place to stay. Just accommodate me for six months. So that I can understand life abroad. That professor was telling the supervisors that you are disadvantaging your students. Give them six months to go out of the country and when they come back you will see a difference. People usually think I am bragging. If we go wherever, and we are given a task. This person studied in South Africa. Being a senior lecturer and I come being a senior lecturer in whatever area of work we are assigned to. I know I will top those people. I know I will top those people. Because, they do not think deeper (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools).

Most participants in the current study moved out of the areas that they had grown up in or attended school to study at different tertiary institutions. Some participants experienced these environments as different from what they previously knew:

> Arriving at University A was a bit of a culture shock for me. And I am glad I chose a small campus and never went to a big university. Because I remember fresher's week. And I went with my resmates to a fresher's ball at the Great Hall. No, it was a fresher's party. I left within the first ten minutes. Because I was choking from the smoke. Almost, everybody was smoking. In my entire life, I had never seen a girl smoke. I left my resmates and walked all the way back to res. I was shocked at how we were handling this freedom now that we were far away from home. But I still felt like I chose a very protective environment. I mean the fact that University A had small houses as residences. Not this big massive place where hundreds of students stay (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools).

> I went to study at University A. I had not seen so many white people in the same place at the same time. It was a culture shock. On the university front. Overall, I embraced it. Other than the culture shock, there was a big shift between high school and the first year. There was a lot of gap-filling. There was a lot of trying to teach yourself stuff so you can quickly catch on (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools).

I would say it was a very liberating university. You could express yourself. You enter university when you are 18. You try to place yourself around the community that you live in. So, you have a sense of freedom. And you also have a sense of achieving. You come from a small village and you meet with people who come from more affluent places. You now have to coexist with these people. You feel a certain way. You place a burden on yourself that you are not only doing this for yourself but there are other people as well (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools).

7.3.2. Matches and Mismatches of Normative Culture-Specific Selves

7.3.2.1.Solipsism vs Contextualism

Manstead (2018) describes solipsism as a psychological orientation that is focused on expressing personal preferences whereas contextualism is an orientation that is focused on meeting requirements in the external environment. Some research participants in this study indicated that the higher education context required the behavioural patterns of hardness and self-sufficiency:

To be honest, it was fun. That is where if you were a person who was not self-sufficient or self-motivated and you were waiting for someone to push you to study or do research, you would be screwed up. Nobody is following you around. Every man for himself. If you don't want to study, it is really up to you (Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools).

(What I learnt from school system) I would say navigating difficult terrain. You stay focused. Going through things when you don't have guidance and it's pushing hard even when you are not sure where things are going….Those from Model C schools were so used to being motivated and guided. I was not used to that. So you feel that you go to the bush and you find your way out. (Sipho, working-class, black African schools).

The same thing with varsity, my mom would put R100 into my bank account and she would say there is the money see what you can do with it. So I had to work ***(laughs).*** I worked in retail as a stocktaker and as an usher during graduation. I know the graduation song by heart and you can wake me up in the middle of the night and I will sing it. What

my family taught me is that you need to stand up for yourself; nobody is coming to save you. I learnt that early in life. My friends would say my father opened a clothing store account for me to buy clothes. I would say yho! I didn't have a father who could open a clothing store account for me. But because of the resources I had, even now, because of the resources I have even now, I would talk to people and ask how I can make money. I asked someone how I could make money at varsity. She said there are graduations and she wrote my name down. Thankfully they chose me to be part of the ushers. The retail work, I saw them on the notice board. You know those if you want a part-time job in the student village and they would allocate work to you (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools).

According to Manstead (2018), individuals who grow up in middle-class contexts are socialized to be motivated by their preferences and goals. Middle-class contexts sometimes underdevelop cultural abilities to adjust to demands in a social environment (Stephens et al., 2014). School contexts where students were closely monitored or where students were given support also sometimes failed to develop the hardness or independence that was required in tertiary institutions:

In the first year, I didn't know what to study. In grade 12, I went for these psychometric things and based on my likes and dislikes, they said I could be in the biological sciences. So, I did that in my first year and midway through the first year, I realized that this is not me. Something was not adding up. I did a genetics module and said genetics is not for me. Genetics is like some kind of Maths. I couldn't get my head around it. Something felt off there. I realized this is not it and I changed my degree the following year. I just randomly chose and it ended up being something that resonated with me. I got credited for most of my modules and I had a lot of free time. I got to live a little. I neglected the few modules that I was taking. And having to experience life. Having a social life. It also put a bit of a dent in my academic year. I was trying to figure it out myself. That was the major challenge. Trying to figure out what I wanted to do but not sure. In my third year, I also wanted to change and my parents said no just stick it out (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools).

RM: I wouldn't say being at the institution was some of my best years. I don't know it might have been both sides ***(inaudible)*** maybe the environment and the way of working. I found the institution to be a ***(long pause)*** Uhm ***(long pause).*** Yes, sure we won't forget to

send you your statements but find your way around. We are a big school, get over it. That type of thing, which is good. I think they prepared you for life but some effort could have been done to support a new person coming from high school into varsity.
LM: Were there any other challenges that you can remember encountering when you were at university?
RM: There weren't any challenges. It was mainly challenges from within. I wouldn't want to blame other factors. It's whether having that motivation, making that effort, those types of things. Those were the challenges. Even a bit of peer pressure. Not understanding that you are fortunate that you can do certain things. And if you are in another crowd where no one is studying, how will you finish? The growing up challenges. The peer pressure, the motivation, opting for instant gratification and noticing that you have to work harder later. Those are mainly the ones I can think of.
(Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools).

It was more about playing. It was just about having fun now for the first few years. The qualification also seemed like it was not taking me anywhere. We were very much ignorant and naïve at the time. Not much informed about careers but just wanted to be in tertiary and do something that will help me earn money at the end of the day. Life was about trying to cram before exams and then drinking and going to parties as much as possible and whenever you can afford it. It was not much constructive. And I guess coming from boarding school, it felt different. Now there are no rules, it was breaking out of a shell and doing the most with the freedom or the illusion of freedom (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools).

7.3.2.2.Influencing others vs driving self

Some research participants in the current study were exposed at a young age to activities that developed their leadership skills. Research participants who were involved in sports or cultural activities indicated that they learnt to work with or drive others from a young age. These participants were exposed to activities that taught them to influence others using political skills (Townsend & Troung, 2017):

When I was in high school, they forced us to play sports or any extra mural activity. But they forced us to do something. Be it sport or drama or any extra-mural activity.

> That was to force us to interact with other people. There are some kids that are shy and they can't communicate with other people. Those activities help you to communicate. You know how to speak to people at different levels and how to deal with different personalities. You find a quiet boy; you deal with them in a certain way. You find a talkative guy and you deal with them in a certain way. That helps in the workplace. There are different personalities. People from different cultures and backgrounds. You have to find a common ground to speak to all of them. Because those experiences in high school and college did help to bring out that (Phillip, middle-class, multiracial schools).

> Our lives were just home, school and church. And that protected us from a lot of destructive behaviours. And we learnt a lot of leadership skills, at school and at church. Because we had no gadgets or those sorts of things. We spent a lot of time doing activities that require teams. That requires us to lead or to follow. And we got exposed because we formed a lot of youth groups. Both at school and at home, you got exposed to designing programmes at a young age. Leading people quite early in our lives. It was a big plus for me because of the roles we played at school and at church. Being in a netball team and being on a church council committee. Those played a role in our CVs. A potential recruiter could see that you are not a one-dimensional academic person. And you have had opportunities quite early in your life to exercise working in a team. And exercising your leadership potential (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools).

> As much as at school they are teaching you excellence, the working life needs you to be very balanced. It means understanding different characters and manoeuvring around the different characters. The working life, you can be the best at your work but you won't get promoted. Whereas at school you got awards and you got praised. At work, they will say great work and hire someone you must train as your boss ***(laughs).*** Yes, schooling does that a bit but I don't think they emphasise it a lot. Sometimes a leader is a leader because they are good at cricket. They will make you a prefect. Whereas at work, you can be good in cricket but they need you to be good at arts, they need you to be good at the rest. Some people got that at school and other people didn't (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools).

According to Townsend and Troung (2017), individuals from working-class backgrounds are taught at home and/or at school to meet challenges in the social environment by driving themselves through grit and determination. Some research participants in this study indicated

that they made a decision when they were young to be hard or they were told by other people in the social environment that they had to be hard so to meet environmental challenges. There were also participants in the current study who minimized challenges that they had experienced:

> My uncle who was working in Johannesburg came. That time migrant labourers came back in December. My uncle put his foot down and said this child is not going to school anymore. She has passed Form 3 ***(Grade 10)***, she must go and work. She can go to work. There are shops and she knows maths. She can calculate. The 16th of December has been a bad day in my life. I lost my mom on the 16th of December and everything that has happened throughout my life always happened on that day. I grew up with this day that I don't like. The 16th of December. My aunt told me that my uncle had said he would take me to the shop where he works and I will work there. I know what it is like to pray with a rosary. I cried the whole day. Having the rosary in my hand, praying and praying. Knowing if he has said something, it is done. I cried and cried and cried up to roundabout 4 pm. I started crying around 10 am. I sat somewhere far away in a hut so that they would not see me cry. It was the first time crying this much. When I was growing up I never shed a tear. I think the death of my mother did that to me. I used to think when I cry who will comfort me? Even if you beat me. I would not cry. I don't remember having tears in my eyes. That day I knew what tears were (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools).

> KM: My mother was sick at some point. Maybe the family part played a role as I could not focus. I would like to use that excuse that I was failing because my mother was sick. I would like to have that as an excuse. Being a grown-up, it is something that would just be an excuse.
> LM: That does not sound like an excuse.
> KM: Yes but you are told how many people have lost their mothers. That is also true, many people lose their parents. Well, people deal with things differently. There are people who go through the same things even worse and people are not the same. Another response you would get is I went through the same thing ***(a parent passing away)*** and I still made it.
> (Khensani, middle-class, multiple schools).

> I was used to doing things myself. That is why when I started at University A, first I found myself a job. I am so used to ***(interrupts self)*** eintlik ***(actually)*** I should say I love

money. I was so used to being independent that it did not stress me out. I was able to balance the two (Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools).

Some research participants who were used to meeting challenges by being hard and self-sufficient indicated that they struggled when they had to complete group assignments that involved influencing others or using political skills. Other participants indicated that they experienced working with others or through others to be an area of development when they joined the world of work:

> The group assignment, I used to hate them. You force me into a group with people that I don't know. In a group assignment, everybody must pull up their socks. If you don't, you are all going to be disadvantaged. Later, I realized how helpful those things are. Because when you are in a work environment, you are managing a team. You are going to be managing people all the time. You are managing output. A project is one project and the company must deliver one project. It needs the contribution of different people so it can be a complete project. It doesn't matter how hard you work, the projects get held up when you cannot complete the work. You need other people to do their part. At the end, the project did not deliver. Yet your portion of the work is completed. The project is not about your work but how to get people to work together. Some are not serious; they leave work early to go drink alcohol. And the project has to be finished. You have to learn how to manage those types of people. For the benefit of getting a good mark out of the project. You have to manage the personalities of these people. …. Work is not an individual space. A company has to deliver a product and too many people have input in the success of the product. This is something that could be transferred from the Masters level into the work environment (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools).
>
> ***(What did you learn from the home context that was not helpful in the workplace)*** It was about support. I don't know. I became so much independent in everything that I did. I got stuck in leadership positions where I should source support. They don't teach you how to be, I don't know what to say, that thing is that it impacted me. To such an extent that I had to go through leadership courses in order for me to fit into leadership positions (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools).
>
> I remember when I first started working; there was a lady who was my mentor at work. And she taught me to see things differently. Yes, you are familiar with doing things a

> certain way, maybe adjust your way of thinking. Allow other people to give you their perspectives as well. Also at work it is not a, ***(interrupts self),*** yes you may have been brilliant at school but we need more ideas. The one thing she said is don't let them, or don't prove them right in them thinking you are a village girl. So your level of thinking is also at the level of a villager. Push yourself. Yes, you are brilliant but you need to do more. That was the mind shift that I needed to make from my end that there was a lot more that I can do. If I were to be handed over a project at work, this is no longer based on what I think must be done and that's it. You also need to put in a lot of work. Research, find out from other people who have completed similar projects and deliver the best. It was just a mind adjustment (Khensani, middle-class, multiple schools).

7.3.2.3. Individualism vs Collectivism

According to Piff et al. (2012), individuals tend to face challenges in a social environment by engaging in fight or flight mode, making friends or comparing themselves to others in the environment. Some research participants in the current study found that the strategy of building connections with others to buffer stress was not always effective in the higher education context as other people came from environments where they were not socialized to be communal. Furthermore, research participants who grew up in environments where adults or school authorities ensured that interactions were fair indicated that they had to learn to stand up for themselves:

> And also when it comes to people in general. When you are in high school, you can report people who bully you. You can try to find other people that you can go fight the person with. In tertiary, it was more individualistic. It was also difficult there if one gets bullied. You are being bullied by someone serious, a criminal of some sort. Now it was not like in high school where the bullying will be between one learner to another but it will be between you and some drug dealer who is forcing you to sell drugs on campus. That was a huge adjustment to make and just being able to assert oneself (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools).

> PM: I stayed at University A for three years and then I did not complete the degree. I dropped out and continued with Engineering at the University of Technology A.

LM: How was the culture there?

PM: The culture was relatively friendly. And I think there were more black ***(African)*** students at the University of Technology A unlike at University A. If I recall, at University A, black ***(African)*** students were about ten per cent of the class. But when I went to the University of Technology A, it was the other way around. Ten per cent were whites and ninety per cent were blacks ***(African).*** And it was more friendly having blacks because we shared the same experiences. Whereas at University A it was quite difficult to share with the ten per cent. Some felt that racism was not something to talk about or to just even think about.

LM: And those who felt that you did not need to talk about it ***(racism)*** were they doing better than you?

PM: No, we were all battling. One of the things I felt was that there was no sense of working as a team. Not necessarily, a team of blacks. Just forming groups. Most of them saw themselves as highly capable to go further in the institution. Taking me back to my matric. I developed a working culture where we were working in groups. I knew the benefits of working in groups. It was easier to perform better. I went with those expectations at University A but I struggled to form those groups.

LM: So, the students were more individualistic?

PM: Yes, yes. When I went to the University of Technology A it was a different experience. Some people were willing to work in groups.

LM: Why do you think there was such a culture difference?

PM: I think it was the pressure of the institution. The pressure it was bringing to students then. I think the institution itself was presenting itself as one of the best institutions in the country. And to be successful it was enforcing individual glamour. That not everyone will succeed. But some will succeed. And some identified themselves as those that will be successful. And get the glory of being a University A graduate.

(Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools).

7.3.3. Capital Requirements

7.3.3.1. Capital Matches

Tertiary institutions are fields that have entrenched practices and members of the dominant groups set capital requirements for those who participate in this field (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). Individuals who possess the capital required in the

higher education context find it easier to navigate these environments when compared to those who do not meet set capital requirements (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). Research participants in this study who met the capital required in the higher education context indicated that their main challenges were understanding the requirements of different academic subjects or discovering their preferences:

> It was purely academic. It was nothing to do with socio-economic issues. It was just getting the hang of the subjects and Accounting which I had never done. Nothing to do with any issues at school or the people there (Thami, middle-class, multiple schools).

> University A was just a University. Nothing hectic there. There is a subject called Accounting. I still dream about it, right ***(laughs).*** I failed Accounting I and repeated it. I did well in Accounting II. I did Accounting III for three years which was a degree on its own ***(laughs).*** The issues were Stats and Accounting. But that is also where I learnt to be OK with girls. When I changed schools, I lost a lot of my friends. I was very anti-girls for a long time. So with the university, I was in res and all I had was girls. So that is where I became friends with girls again. The environment was fine. I was that girl getting R500 a month. I was not that outgoing. I was not a typical university student who went out a lot. I am still like that. I would hear that people went out and I would say I was sitting with you until 23:00 and they will say life happens after 23:00 (***laughs***). The challenge for me was getting into cliques. I make friends one, one, one. My friends are not friends with each other. That was a big challenge for me. Having people in my face 24-7, that was a challenge for me. And Accounting ***(laughs)*** (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools).

7.3.3.2. Symbolic Capital

According to Hardy (2014), the symbolic capital valued in a field changes as structures and field positions change in a context. Symbolic capital accrues when one social group is regarded as more competent resulting in that group having a social advantage when compared to other groups (Moore, 2014). Research participants in the current study who entered the higher education context during the early years of post-apartheid South Africa or the latter years of the apartheid system indicated that they experienced overt racial discrimination in

this context. The academic staff in this setting openly spoke about the low symbolic value of a black African identity:

> It was very harsh lecturing staff. We were told Engineering was not for, ***(pause),*** meant for black ***(African)*** people. There were other universities that we could still go to like Turfloop. They will pass remarks that there are good universities for blacks ***(Africans).*** You can go to the University of Turfloop or you can go to the University of North West. At the time, it was called the University of Bophuthatswana. And one lecturer said in the first week, the Faculty of Arts is still open. We must just go to the Faculty of Arts. And do Arts degrees. And it was quite universal in terms of the lecturing staff what we were hearing. Though not in the same words but they were telling us that we blacks ***(Africans)*** were not fit to be in that industry or the institution (Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools).

> And I had not experienced direct discrimination until I went to University A. The '80s were about institutionalized racism but at University A you would find a lecturer who literally hates you (Sipho, working-class, black African schools).

> I went straight to University A ***(after high school).*** It was very discriminatory. There were mainly white lecturers. Most of the student population was mainly white. …White students were given an unfair advantage. Given support material and they would even tell them the scope of the exams behind the scenes. (Thabang, middle-class, black African students-multiracial teachers).

Research participants in the current study who were in their 30s did not mention overt racism as one of the challenges that they experienced in the higher education context. Only two participants in this age group discussed race. One participant spoke about the subtle racism at the university where he studied at and the other participant spoke about how students of different race groups were accepting of each other at the university where she studied:

> When I first got there, I was fascinated. I am seeing a lot of people. First of all, there were a lot of people. It's a mix; there are also a lot of white people. But people are chilled, this is the students. The students were chilled; it is no longer taboo to have a white friend. We are all in the same classroom; we are all there to learn. A lot of us in the first year don't understand what is going on there. We are all just like, wow; we are in the same boat.

This is not a race thing. I don't understand Maths or Stats and the white girl next to me doesn't also understand. You start to understand that race does not have anything to do with intellectual capacity. The culture of the students is that everybody is accepting of one another. I don't want to speak about racism or racist South Africa but only those kids who had an upbringing where black people and white people couldn't mix. Other than that everybody was accepting of one another. There were also different cultures. You get to meet and find yourself in a group of friends where somebody is a Foreign National. Somebody is of a different culture. I found that to be a great experience. Learning other people's cultures. We were all ***(interrupts self)*** from my experience, we were more accepting and welcoming of other people's cultures. You come from different backgrounds and you could still be friends (Khensani, middle-class, multiple schools).

Okay, this is a good example. I was with a mate of mine right. We had to go query marks that you didn't count this right or something like that. We are two black ***(African)*** guys. The person is just an administrator of the opposite skin colour to us. The issue we are here for is that here is the script. The issue that we are here for is that you need to record the marks so that they are reflected correctly on the system. So, at a certain time, we are looking outside the window. It was an interesting view of a suburb. Then when we are looking at the suburb we are smiling. It was a nice view. All of a sudden this person thinks we are trying to do something nefarious. All of a sudden this person thinks we are trying to cheat the system. The person was no longer keen to help us. She told us we had to wait, we had to send another email or something like that. That was genuinely painful. We were there seeking genuine help and genuinely wanting to be assisted with the issue that brought us there. It was fine and we went to whoever and the issue was sorted out. I am trying to show you an example of something you could not take up that thing with the powers that be. It would not hold weight. You would end up being the frustrated one. On the whole, everything was fine. Everything was working. You were accommodated well. Everything was working fine and you could not pinpoint anything specifically in class where you had to ask a question and they would say no, you are this way and we cannot answer you. No, no, no. Everything was fine. If you get a mark, the mark was fair and it was how you performed. But once in a while, you would have that odd weird feeling. But there were definitely odd circumstances where you look and say uh uh this could be because my skin colour was different (Mpho, middle-class, black African students-multiracial teachers).

7.3.3.3.Economic Capital

High fees make the higher education context inaccessible for most students from working-class backgrounds (Calitz & Fourie, 2016; Makgetla, 2018). Working-class students are mostly black African as this groups forms the majority of those who are poor in South Africa (Andestad, 2018; World Bank, 2018). Some of the research participants in this study indicated that they experienced financial challenges when they were completing their tertiary education. These participants had to devise different strategies to address these challenges:

> Yes, getting books. Even getting funding was a challenge because my mum was working for the government and my dad was working for the government. They were not paid well. I was in the gap where you are too rich to get a bursary and too poor to afford as well. There is a res that needs to be paid, books that need to be bought. I never bought a single book throughout my tertiary education. It meant I had to align myself with people who are well off than myself. Who can lend me textbooks and I make copies of the critical sections of that book. And to study when they are sleeping. When they are sleeping, I take the book and study. That is how I got through university (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools).

> Financial support was a very very big problem that I encountered. In PhD, I was away from home using foreign currency. I paid the first term with the money that I got from my pension payout from South Africa. I stayed there for six years. Ask yourself, how I survived these six years. They were very hard six years. They were very hard. I would do any work, anything ***(emphasis).*** My daughter used to cry when I said I was going to apply to be a dishwasher. There was nothing. I had to come out with something. For me that tribulation was the core, I just survived. Because I knew what I wanted. I didn't even care. Once you give me any type of work I will do it (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools).

> Financially I guess. Because that is when I learnt that one has to be able to manage finances. It was a bit different from getting R50 a month to getting R500 a month. There was a huge difference because in boarding school they cook for you. There, they don't cook for you. You have to make sure you buy the necessary food. And there would be

> challenges because one would not get money because of challenges at home. I wasn't prepared for that. I wasn't prepared for nights when I would go to bed without having eaten anything (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools).

7.3.3.4. Cultural Capital: Computer Literacy

The higher education context required research participants to be computer literate. Most of the participants who attended multiracial schools indicated that they were taught computer literacy at school. Those who did not go through the multiracial school only learnt how to use a computer when they got to university:

> When you have gone to the types of schools that I went to, you had access to computers. You knew how to switch a computer on. You know how to use it. Poor kids, when they got to first-year, they didn't even know how to switch on a computer. Especially those who came from rural schools. They would be taught that you switch on the computer here and you switch it off here. You use it like this. So, the advantage is that these things were there in high school. At our school, we also had a class where we were taught how to type. Going to varsity, those kids who did not have that privilege you could see. They started afresh (Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools).

> Now they have to learn to do stuff on the computer for assignment submissions. There will always be that culture shock that people who come from the villages will have to put in the extra work. Just to be on the same level as other kids at the varsity level (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools).

> The qualification itself was hard, I had to be honest. Hence, there were a lot of people who were not able to complete it. If you can recall back then when we were discussing a lot of things. One of the things that I could attribute to was the differences in the technological advancement of a township in a rural area in comparison to a township in a place like Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and Soweto ***(urban setting).*** Some of the challenges that were apparent to myself and a lot of black people who were coming from townships that were removed from main cities because we were never exposed to technological advances. Now that is an area where you are supposed to deal with technology in an academic environment, you ask yourself, what is this now? The course itself required a

> lot of technological knowledge. So, you need to appreciate that if you have not seen a computer before, you genuinely have somewhat of a challenge (Mpho, middle-class, multiple schools).

> The other challenge was technology. I studied at a very high technological university. That was a very big problem. I had basic skills. That is why I say it depends on the individual. The first thing I did with my pension payout was to register for a computer course. I did a course there so I had basic skills such as opening Word and Excel and opening PowerPoint presentations. Those are the skills that I had. I arrive at the university abroad. The first thing that they give you is login details. Start working on the programme. The minute I started clicking the keyboard my head went throb throb throb. I would always leave last in the lab (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools).

7.3.3.5. Cultural Capital: Communication

According to Stephens et al. (2014), students who attend middle-class schools are socialized to be comfortable approaching teachers to ask for help. These individuals are socialized to regard teachers as supportive (Stephens et al., 2014). Black African students raised working-class in a study conducted by Kiguwa (2014) indicated that they were shocked by how black African students raised middle-class were able to approach lecturers and speak to them freely. There were research participants in this study who indicated that they were comfortable approaching members of the academic staff if they needed help:

> In long-distance University A, there was always that pressure of the marks and the results being posted late. You never knew if you qualified for exams or not. There was never someone, you could go back to, and ask where did I go wrong? So for example, if you qualify really badly, you knew that you're not going to get feedback, in-depth feedback, on what you need to work on. Whereas at University B, you could just send an email to the lecturers. This is my script and what areas do I need to concentrate on, it wasn't an issue. And they will probably just send you a message and say come in an hour earlier. We will just quickly go through your script. I think once again, just the turnaround time of things like that literally. That person who could go through the script with you. Bless the person at long-distance University A, who cannot go through 300 scripts (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools).

> If you had issues, you could talk to your lecturers. I was a talkative person, I was known. So, any challenges no (Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools).

> After two years of working, I realize that ugh this life is not what I want. I am not living my best life. And then I registered with a long distance university. I left the country with my parents when my father was posted to another country. I opted to go with them. Because they had options. With the long distance university, you can write your exams anywhere in the world. I did my degree and I could say self-study. Actually, that worked more than anything, funny enough. I just depended on myself and a few notes from lecturers. And asking lecturers questions. But I progressed with self-study (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools).

Struggling to communicate in the medium of instruction used in the higher education context hindered some research participants in this study from interacting with members of the academic staff. Other research participants also commented that they had observed how student who were not competent in the medium of instruction used in the higher education context struggled:

> And if you are coming from a village directly, there is also the language thing. Now your classes are conducted in English fully. And now you have to make a transition (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools).

> Also the medium of instruction, English was a problem. Having gone through the then homeland system and the education system that I had gone through. Although English was regarded as the medium of instruction. It was not enforced, teachers would explain a physics concept in Sepedi. For the sake of our understanding. That was making it easier for us to understand. But some teachers disregarded the importance of English. I remember our English teacher used to not provide us with English lessons. He would just talk to us about our well-being. Those things caught up with me when I went to university because it was purely English. And I also did not have the confidence to converse fully in English. So that also created a delay in acquiring new knowledge. It was difficult to frame a question. I remember there was one harsh lecturer. Whenever you asked your question depending on how he understood or misunderstood you. He will say, this is a bullshit question. We were not used to the language where someone can just say bullshit. And then it's something that ***(pause).*** If someone says the word like that, you think there must

> have been a serious offence. I must have committed a serious offence for this person to respond this way. In the English community, they use that word but I cannot use that word now even in our community. When I talk to someone and say that is bullshit. So that puts pressure that you have to think more before you ask that question. And by the time, you have found a way to ask the question the lecture is over. You are in another session (Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools).

7.3.3.6.Cultural Capital: Evaluation Standards

According to Stephens et al. (2014), middle-class school contexts encourage students to understand the logic behind concepts whereas working-class schools encourage students to memorize concepts. Research participants in this study indicated that the tertiary institutions that they had attended had different standards on how they assessed whether students had grasped the material that they had been taught. Some tertiary institutions expected students to cram and reproduce the answers provided in the lectures and textbooks. Other institutions expected students to be able to apply the learning material to different problems:

> The courses themselves. They were based on me learning general knowledge that I can't use. Most of my university life was about memorizing, cramming and regurgitating whatever I memorized. It wasn't about helping me think. Be creative and delve into knowledge and understand what is really happening. Most of it was about memorizing and proving that I can recall. I would say most of the knowledge I obtained was useless. I can't think of anything. I guess with maths, I did maths in tertiary, which for every problem a solution (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools).

> I think in tertiary, critical thinking. Just questioning why things are the way that they are. Why you can't push the boundary with that thing? If somebody says this mark has been like this for twenty years. You can change the mark to be blue. Something like that or that kind of thinking…. In high school, we were chasing marks rather than understanding how you can flip things around. Somebody can be good at understanding something and get the best marks but if you ask them to change that concept. They will say where do I even start. They were not taught that way. That approach that I just need to get a good mark was not helpful. I can get a good mark but am I able to absorb the concept, play around

> with it in the working world and fit it into what I am working with. It's a different world (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools).

Some participants stated that one of the adjustments that they had to make in the higher education context was to incorporate the expectation of lecturers that they should be able to apply concepts that they were being taught:

> The curriculum was just meant to feed ***(interrupts self)*** which is why my transition from high school to university was vast. In high school, I could do all the extra questions at the back of the book to practice. And in the test I would expect some of them to pop up or be very similar with 5 changing into 2 stuff like that. In varsity, I would do all the questions in the textbook but they would come across like what. I had to learn that this method was not working. You need to be able to flip this thing from different angles. To be able to answer what comes my way or to at least show them I was going there or in the direction of the answer (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools).
>
> The challenges were academic. The adjustment of going to university coming from high school or primary ***(interrupts self)***, maybe the kind of schools that I went to like had a part to play in this. Obviously, the education ***(interrupts self)***, the standard of education I got back home is different from the standard they use here in Gauteng. You come from a private school but in the village. And you were the best student there. You come here, all that best student stuff flies out of the window. Because you are presented with challenges. The way that they are teaching you here is at a different level. Maybe you are just not grasping or understanding the concepts or maybe the foundation was not as strong as you thought it was. So the first challenge was that I wrote a test. I didn't have the results. I could feel that I probably came out with a 2 there. That was a big deal for me. I cried so many days and nights. I called my mother and said I want to quit. She said why? I tell you this thing is hard and I want to go to a different university. In the beginning, I even went through counselling. People didn't understand. You know when you have passed or failed. For me, that was the first thing. They were like just wait for the results. Anyway, the results came and I failed dismally. The first challenge was just figuring out that you need to do more. You can't now rely on the fact that you were a brilliant student in high school. It can't be based on that. Maybe in high school, you had to read one book to understand a concept. Now you are at university, you are now a big person. You need to ***(interrupts self)*** if they say you must read what is an apple. It's not the basic what is an apple that you find on Google. Not the definition in your textbook. You need to read ten

other books that are going to tell you different explanations of what an apple is. But saying the same thing. Then you need to articulate that in your responses. That was the first challenge that I came across that I think I eventually conquered. It was like that throughout the four years. I had to constantly go back. I failed a couple of times. And it was basically, you need to do more than what you are doing. If you don't understand something, ask someone else who is doing better academically (Khensani, middle-class, multiple schools).

Other research participants indicated that they found that the school systems that they had been through had not equipped them with the knowledge that was expected of students at their level. These participants mentioned that they had to find ways to supplement gaps in their knowledge:

Now I got to University B after getting a BA degree from University A. At the time they were still teaching in Afrikaans. Obviously, everyone looked at me and felt pity for me. I remember the lecturer saying if you do not have maths at the 3rd year level, forget it you are not going to crack it in this class. I did not even have ***Std 10 (Grade 12)*** mathematics. It's just out of pride that I did not walk out of class that day. I didn't want the other students to know that I did not have matric maths…..What was interesting was that I partnered with a guy who came from a historically Afrikaans university. I go to this gentleman and he teaches me. Already I have been written off. Also, the language in the class. Everything students talk about, I have not been exposed to. And I am doing an Honours degree. Everything is just new. Then I get a distinction in the first test. And I perform better than the guy who was teaching me mathematics. Remember I last did mathematics in STD 8 ***(Grade 10).*** The second test, I get another distinction. Eventually, I complete the Honours degree and go for another programme. And I get it Cum laude as well. Then that is where I could tell the difference in my performance from my University A education and matric results. It was not necessarily that I did not have the ability or the talent. It was more environmental. The environment was not conducive to the accumulation of knowledge and learning (Sipho, working-class, black African schools).

I lacked information about scholarly work. I did not know the African perspective regarding the work we were doing. Previously, there was minimal discussion of African scholars. Or about African issues. What did I do? I read Eskia, I read Fanon, I read the books I was telling you about. I read a lot of Pan-African literature. And then I will

synthesise and see what I could use in my work as an African scholar. That was the worst challenge of them all (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools).

7.4.SUMMARY OF BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

This chapter and the preceding chapter provided research results regarding the first research question: What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school? Tables 5 to 7 provide a summary of normative behavioural patterns that I identified from stories told by research participants regarding their experiences in the home and school contexts. Only new behavioural patterns that had not been mentioned in the home context were recorded under the school context:

Table 5: Behavioural patterns of participants who were raised in urban townships and inner city areas:

Participant	Home Context	School Context
Tinyiko Baloi Working-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Connected • Strong, tough, resilient • Adjusting to situations **Expressive Independence** • Distinct and seperate • Influencing situations • Focus on self-development	
Sipho Dlamini Working-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Strong, tough, resilient • Adjusting to situations **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situation • Focus on self-development • Distinct and separate	**Expressive Independence** • Assumption of equality with others

Lebohang Dube Working-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Adjusting to situations • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Distinct and separate • Self-expression	**Expressive Independence** • Influencing situation
Teboho Mohale Working -Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy **Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development	
Thabang Motloung Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Adjusting to situations • Connected • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Distinct and separate • Self-expression	**Expressive Independence** • Focus on self • Influencing situation
Phillip Bembe Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Adjusting to situations • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Assumption of equality with others	**Expressive Independence** • Self-expression • Influencing situations • Focus on self-development

Table 6: Behavioural patterns of participants who were raised in homelands:

Participants	Home Context	School Context
Katlego Mphahlele Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Similar and connected • Awareness of social hierarchy • Socially responsive	**Hard Interdependence** • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Self-expression • Focus on self-development
Phetogo Kgomo Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Similar and connected • Awareness of social hierarchies	**Hard Interdependence** • Socially responsive
Thami Majola Middle-Class	**Hard Independence** • Strong, tough, resilient	**Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development
Mpho Mogano Middle-Class	**Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchies **Expressive Independence** • Assumption of equality with others • Self-expression • Distinct and separate • Influencing situation

Lethabo Kgatla Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Socially responsive **Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development	**Expressive Independence** • Self-expression • Influencing situation
Vuyokazi Ndamase Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Connected • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situations	**Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development • Self-expression • Distinct and seperate
Khensani Maluleka Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy **Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development • Influencing situations	**Hard Interdependence** • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Distinct and separate • Assumption of equality with others
Relebogile Kgapola Working-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy • Similar and connected • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situations • Focus on self-development	**Expressive Independence** • Distinct and separate • Self-expression
Mokgadi Maputla Working-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Similar and connected • Awareness of social hierarchy • Strong, tough, resilient • Socially responsive **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situation • Focus on self-development	**Expressive Independence** • Distinct and separate • Self-expression
Noxolo Hobo Working-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Similar and connected • Awareness of social hierarchy • Socially responsive **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situation • Self-expression • Focus on self-development	**Expressive Independence** • Distinct and seperate

Table 7: Behavioural patterns of participants who were raised in suburbs:

Participants	Home Context	School Context
Lethiwe Nkosi Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Similar and connected • Awareness of social hierarchy **Expressive Independence** • Focus on self-development	**Hard Interdependence** • Strong, tough, resilient **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situation

Banthatile Motaung Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy **Expressive Independence** • Distinct and seperate • Influencing situations • Focus on self-development • Asuumption of equality with others	**Expressive Independence** • Self-expression
Reitumetse Mokwena Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy **Expressive Independence** • Influencing situation • Focus on self-development • Assumption of equality with others • Distinct and seperate	**Expressive Independence** • Self-expression
Thato Kgapola Middle-Class	**Hard Interdependence** • Connected **Expressive Independence** • Self-expression • Influencing situations • Focus on self-development • Assumption of equality with others • Distinct and seperate	**Hard Interdependence** • Awareness of social hierarchy

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESEARCH FINDINGS: WORK CONTEXT

8.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the results related to the second research question (RQ2): What are the differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations that were acquired in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations? The chapter will also discuss results related to the third research question (RQ3): What strategies have black Africans in middle-class occupations deployed to facilitate their upward career mobility or to maintain their position in the workplace? Bold italics are used to reflect comments added by myself in the quotations of research participants.

8.2. WORK CONTEXT

8.2.1. Conceptualization of Work Space

Khunou (2015), when discussing the term social class, argued that academics sometimes assume that the concepts that they use are understood the same way in broader society. Discussions with research participants who had international exposure or the experience of working in international companies made me aware that the demarcation of work contexts as white and black African spaces was conceptual. A majority of these research participants did not conceptualize the work space as black and white. Some of them employed the cultural narrative of boundaryless careers to conceptualize the work context (Karakus, 2021). These

participants did not see themselves as bound to an organization and they managed their careers by moving around so they could acquire marketable skills or they saw themselves as physically located in an organization but remotely working in an international space. Hence, the stories of most of these research participants were not based on racial hierarchies in the workplace but they focused on labour market demands:

> What my experience has been with some businesses , irrespective of the culture, toxic relationships are allowed to flourish. I have mostly worked for global multinationals. They were mostly led by white executives. Even within those, we would have a black general manager or CEO but at group-level, you would have your white CEO. So I don't think I can really pick up a difference. I haven't had the opportunity to see the difference between the two leadership styles. Because there are standard processes, frameworks and governance standards that are set by a global office. So, everybody follows what has been established and it is the same in all global companies (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools, executive).

> I focus on what the top ***(international)*** universities want. What the top people want. What top universities want. What takes a person to the top. I just don't read any autobiographies. I read the biographies of top people like Warren Buffett or Bill Gates (Thabang, middle-class, black African students-multiracial teachers, senior specialist).

> If I was a person here ***(South Africa),*** I will only use the institution that I am at. For me now, the disadvantage is that I do not know African scholars or African researchers. Currently, my networks are in the US, UK and Australia. Those are the countries that I collaborate with (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> Finding gaps and staying long enough to get opportunities needed and once that has happened up-skill myself and then move on to another**…..** Essentially job hopping and planned career progression within a role and once you have gotten that opportunity, you move on. Because now it becomes necessary not to stick around for too long because that is when exploitation happens. Initial job hopping and also planning opportunities that are available (Thami, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> What I have seen is people change jobs, whether we like it or not, if you are top-tier supposedly educated and there aren't that many people in the market. Then you go out

and advertise yourself. Get into many spaces and get the exposure that you can so that you can grow your career…Other races what I have noticed is that are moving out of SA. We are still keeping to SA. Only a few people that I know are moving out of SA. But most of the black guys are still in SA. It is still something that is open to everyone but fortunately, because of our legislation, companies need to stick to targets. The employment equity act which supports us, at least as black women. (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

8.2.2. White-dominated work context

8.2.2.1. Hierarchies in the environment

Workplaces have organizational structures that assign different roles to employees based on hierarchies in the national context (Thomson, 2014). These structures communicate the positioning of employees in a setting and the roles that members of different social groups belong to (Hardy, 2014). Furthermore, these structures communicate to employees what is likely, reasonable and possible in the environment regarding the structural positions that they can achieve (Hardy, 2014):

> I am a black ***(African)*** female sitting at an EXCO table with 15 people and I am the only black female, I don't like that. I don't even like verbalizing it because it stinks. But it is what it is. I am the only black female sitting at that table. And the other black face at this table is an Indian male. That's it, out of 15 people that sit for EXCO every month. You can imagine the dynamics there. Social and ethics committee, there are two non-executive members. One black (***African)*** female and one Indian female. At least that one is different. There is one white female as well. So Social and ethics committee is different. Fifteen males and only one of them is Indian, which is considered black. Believe me, you are going to feel every inch of otherness (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> Obviously, in black companies, you are not going to feel black. In a company that is dominated by Afrikaners and other white people, like my current company, we are just few. Maybe 10% or 15% are black African, 5% Indian and the rest are Afrikaners and

white people. There is no black person in management ….At my current company, I have been in the same position without being promoted. There is no strategy, even if you want to do something there is no promotion. You will stay in the same position until you decide to apply for other jobs and leave. At previous companies I worked in, if I worked hard I would surely have been promoted. Unfortunately, you have to look for a place where they will give you a better salary. In the current company, there is nothing that you can change (Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

But maybe the second part could also be where history ***(taught at school)*** makes other people feel like second grade and other people first grade. And then you get to work. And you find the person you are coaching, is going to become your manager. So from the history that you learned, that you remember, so it used to present Africans or black people in a not-so-great way, the history that you went through said inferior, inferior. And we are more into labour, teach the Bantu how to do labour work. And what's interesting is when you look at our organization, the reality is along those two lines. Like if you look at the customer service space, the customer relations manager is white and the trainer or consultant is black. So we see it time and time again, in different ways. And it is just something that you don't need to learn. It just comes naturally (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

8.2.2.2.Maintenance of hierarchies

Black Africans in middle-class occupations are a minority in organizations where white people are members of the dominant group (Canham & Williams, 2017). These black Africans disrupt the predictability and stability of racial hierarchies in the work environment (Deer, 2014). According to Anderson (2015), black people who enter white spaces come in with a deficit of credibility as competence in these spaces is racialized. Some research participants in this study indicated that the cultural narrative of racialized competence was used to manipulate how black Africans were presented to others in the work environment. Furthermore, this cultural narrative was used by members of the dominant group in the workplace to legitimise questioning the expertise of black Africans or to justify racialised disrespect (Anderson, 2015):

> They use the language, propaganda to say you are not yet competent enough. You need to accumulate experience. It does not happen for white people that they have to accumulate experience. They are perceived to be having experience. The language that they, they use the language that they know will take you down. Anyone who sits at the table will say if you are seeing this person this way that they still need to grow and they do not have experience. It is a widely accepted understanding, not understanding but notion that South African blacks are not experienced yet to take leadership positions. That is what the gatekeepers will play around with (Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools, specialist).

> People always think they know better, even in your expert field. And you will get people or a call for example from a portfolio executive. I wanted to ask about this. Funny how this one said you advised them this way. I will say for different situations, I will give different advice. Yours is different. You always feel like people are trying to catch you out. You cannot have your guard down (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> The company did not have technical expertise in this field and I was trying to research how we can do the work in-house instead of getting a sub-contractor. I had to learn things that I have never learnt before. Ask around. Get help from people who had expertise or worked on similar issues or projects. And then I had to present something to our office on how I understood it. Somebody was insulted by my confidence and he said you are too confident in something that you are just trying to figure out. Too confident, how can somebody be too confident? They were expecting me to shy away and say I think maybe. I said it like I was sure. This is what I learnt and this is how they are doing it. This is what we could do. And they ended up doing it in-house and they are generating money from that. I learnt a new skill and the company got to learn a new skill. They were not comfortable having one person know that skill, I had to teach another white lady how to do this. They said she must also know it so she can challenge your knowledge of it. But I don't take it personally. They have a lot of unlearning to do (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

Lethabo (middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist) further indicated that some of the tactics that were used in white-dominated spaces to maintain racial hierarchies could be likened to psychological warfare. These tactics included suggesting to black Africans that

they were not good enough even though there was no objective evidence to support the assertion:

> They also play on ***(long pause)*** they work on your psyche. At one point, I declined to present a project because I connected the dots that I was the only black person on the team. They needed a black face for the presentation to convince the client that they have a black person on the team. So I turned it down. Everybody was saying you turned down that person. That person is ruthless. You are going to feel it. Like they will make you feel that you turned them down. They play on victimizing or making you feel like you are less than others even if you are the best performer. You are constantly overperforming and worried about your performance. They play on those.

Research participants in this study stated that different HR practices were used to maintain hierarchies in workplaces dominated by white people. Some participants in this study perceived that managers misused HR practices to maintain racial hierarchies whilst other participants perceived that managers misused HR practices to serve their interests. According to Gray and Kish-Gephart (2013), managers in an organization sometimes base their actions on self-interest but their collective actions aggregate to disadvantage members of subordinate groups. Hence, HR practices are conduits in organizations dominated by white people that link the actions of members of the dominant group with objective structures in the environment (Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013):

> The one thing that I noticed, I don't know who said it but education was the key until black people got it. Now all of the sudden the spec must weigh heavier on experience. 15 years experience in a specialized field. Which black person will have that experience? You can see little things that they are doing to tweak here and there. BEE is still helping and I hope to God it will still be there for the next 10 to 20 years. Apartheid took how long. I hope this ***(BEE)*** goes on for longer. Right now, they can't do anything about it. If there was no BEE, the senior and top levels will even be leaner (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> ***(Long Hesitation)*** what happens, mostly where I am ***(interrupts self).*** maybe it is a general thing. You know yourself and you have been doing the same thing for a long

time. They always say you are not ready. You ask what do you mean I am not ready? I think someone else is just a better candidate. Sometimes you find yourself training the person they say is readier than you are. What they will say is that my experience is not much. Or I have the experience but because your qualification is this. I studied Economics. I am in Banking. As much I have been doing this for so long and I have got the experience to show for it. If the next candidate is someone who studied banking that person has a better chance. Because they would say you need to have 18 months of experience in the role. So, here I am with my 5 years and an Economics degree. Maybe with 18 months' experience, they got that Banking qualification. That is the other thing that they sort of limit our progression with. The other is when there is an open position. They obviously put out the advert. When the right person or the person that they are actually looking for does not make it, the position becomes, what is the word that they like using, HR words, they have withdrawn the post. We will let you know the next time it is available. That is the thing that they would do (Khensani, middle-class, multiple schools, specialist).

My observation is that it is easier for white colleagues to be promoted. And the formal requirements or processes ***(long pause)*** are also not rigid for promotion. It was discussed somewhere. There are no ***(pause)*** their weaknesses are not even mentioned. We still need to support this person in these areas where we think they need help. With whites, you always hear about the good experience they are bringing into their positions. And that they are very capable to achieve anything or what they need to. When it comes to black people, it will be a promotion but it will have some buts. This person is taking over this position but they will be supported by so and so. It will be a white person, a white guy. For helping to gain confidence for doing some of the work. Already when you are black and you are being promoted. They come with the presumption that you are not confident and you need the support of white people. It might be a white person who needs your support more than you need their support. I feel those who went higher end up being frustrated in the system because their worth is not acknowledged in terms of what they can do in the workplace. They will always have a senior title or senior management role. In terms of operational work, there will be some white people doing the work. It is assumed blacks are not fully competent (Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools, specialist).

Well, they don't accept us and I don't think they will. You have worked in a company for three years. Your salary has not gone up much in the three years. When they give you an increase it's 2%, it's 5%. But if you compare yourself with an Afrikaner employee, it's

totally different. The person earns more than you. We know and it's not that we check salaries. It is also the industry that we are in, it favours Afrikaners. Most companies that dominate the industry are owned by Afrikaners or white people. It makes sense why black people are not taken care of. It is not that hectic but you can feel it sometimes that I am black for sure (Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

They put a ceiling on them by giving them the same work. Or locking them in the same type of work. That will not enable them to achieve the KPIs for moving up to the next level. They can lock you up in a certain type of work. Once, you are locked in it's hard to get out if you don't have a sponsor or have volunteered on some project so you can get a foot in. They do that (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

Also, in some instances, the budget is there for people to be developed. A leader then puts specific criteria on what you can and cannot study. So, sometimes it is not even in the organization's rules. What I mean is for example I am in insurance. I am interested in procurement. ***(I want)*** To join the procurement department, even though I am in the insurance department, and then when I go to my boss and say I want a qualification in procurement. He will say you cannot do that because it is not aligned with the department. And then the argument is that you know we have done my development plan and I want to move out of insurance. That is when they start putting limitations. When you read the policy of the company, there is nothing around the types of rules that they create (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

If you are good at what you do, you might not necessarily be recommended for the next job. You can be excellent at what you do and still stay there. What I think for me ***(laughs),*** my previous boss once said I seem to be everywhere and by everywhere he does not know what I want. He knew I wanted to leave. I said I am broke, I want money. I am working for money; I am not working for fun. So I would apply for finance jobs in the company. And I felt when they came to him and said Thato applied, I felt when they came to him and said Thato applied for this role, are you approving the move. I felt for the longest of times he said no. Because I did my job but he also felt I was too ambitious. Once he left as a manager, I got my promotion under a different manager. So I think those are tactics that people use. You make me look good; you are going to stay there (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

8.2.3. Black African Work Context

8.2.3.1. Hierarchies in the environment

The public service sector is the main driver of the growth of the black middle class in Africa (Hellsten, 2016; Resnick, 2015; Sumich, 2016). Black people access middle-class occupations through employment in the public service sector or state contracts (Hellsten, 2016; Resnick, 2015; Sumich, 2016). The dominant narrative in Africa is that those who occupy middle-class occupations in the public service sector were employed through corruption or via political or familial patronage (Hellsten, 2016; Madonsela, 2018; Sumich, 2016; Telzak, 2014). Some research participants in this study who worked in the public service sector mentioned that top positions in this environment were occupied by political deployees:

> Most top positions comprise of political deployees. Because you are tasked with the mandate of implementing the policies of the ruling organization. Therefore, I suppose they trust their people to make sure that those policies are being implemented. Hence, they deploy those people into those positions. That's what they have in common at the top. Gender-wise, it's a mixture of males and females and the majority is black ***(African)*** (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> NH: My space is politically motivated. If you don't align politically then you can be disqualified from advancement.
> LM: This political affiliation, is it to a political party?
> NH: Yes, yes.
> (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

Relebogile (working-class, black African schools, executive), however, argued that it was still possible to attain a senior position in the public service sector without being a member of any political party. Teboho (working-class, black African schools, specialist) further agreed

that some political deployees were qualified for their jobs whereas others were not. Bonnin and Ruggunan (2013, 2016) mention that in 2011 the government embarked on a project to professionalize the public service sector with the aim of replacing unqualified political deployees with qualified candidates:

> I always tell these young people, no one has ever spoken on my behalf. I have never been deployed because I am not a card-carrying member of any political organization. I have never gotten into a job because somebody knew me. But I have equipped myself to a level with my studies (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> LM: What types of people occupy senior positions in your environment?
> TM: Some criteria is used when appointing people into certain positions. Some are politically affiliated.
> LM: What types of positions do they use political affiliation and what types of positions do they consider credentials?
> TM: Some politicians have qualifications for the posts that that they are occupying. Some are just affiliated by politics. If you speak well, you are loud, you know how to insult people then they give you that position.
> (Teboho, working-class, black African schools, specialist).

Bonnin and Ruggunan (2013, 2016) further mention that the inconsistency in the competence of public servants creates variations in public sector service delivery. Some research participants in the current study also indicated that the prominence of political patronage in the public service sector only became noticeable in recent years. In the past, the public sector employed qualified individuals. Moreover, other participants stated that sometimes political interference hindered the normal functioning of the organizations that they were in:

> Now, I work for the government. In the biggest part of my career, these things of corruption as is known now were not a major factor. You know if you think about it, I am not saying that there was no corruption. Corruption was not a big determinant of what happened in the organization. So, the management was equally good. It was black-led organizations that delivered stadiums. It was black-led organizations that delivered the Gautrain. It was ACSA that developed the airport in South Africa. I don't know if you travel a lot, you will realize when you go to other African countries that we actually have

a good airport. In terms of focus, there was a fear of failure from black managers. It's only in the past few years that we experienced a lot of lapses. People not taking pride in the kind of work that they do (Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive).

Recently we have been having problems in our municipality. When politicians are fighting up there. Our municipality council are fighting amongst each other. So when they are busy fighting up there. Their fighting affects our work down here. One day when I was sitting in my office doing office work. They came into the office to chase us away. There is a meeting, we are not working because of this and that. But when we ask them how that affects us, they will say you are an employee of ***(interrupts self)***, you are an employee here and you are going to do as we say. We are fighting and why are you working? I will say I am not a politician. My work here is to do 1, 2,3. Your politics have nothing to do with my work. They will swear at us, insult us and do all sorts of things. We would just leave our offices and go home (Teboho, working-class, black African schools, specialist).

There were also female participants in this study who mentioned that top positions in their organizations were occupied by black African males. This perception is supported by a report issued by the Commission for Employment Equity (2019) that indicated that black African males made up sixty-seven per cent (67%) of top management and sixty-one per cent (61%) of senior management in the public service sector (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019):

LK: Yes but predominately male. I don't know if it is me or what, but in my section, it is predominately male. I don't know if that is a historical thing because they have been in those positions for a long time or what.
LM: In your other setting ***(white-dominated organization)*** was it more gender mixed?
LK: It was mixed.
(Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

LM: How would you describe the environment where you currently work?
NH: It is a construction environment. It is very male-dominated. It is a very much male-dominated environment.
LM: Are the people in management mostly black or white?
NH: It is mostly black men.

LM: What types of people are likely to be promoted in this environment?
NH: Definitely men.
(Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

When I was appointed to a senior position in government, I was the first woman to be appointed to that position since 1994. Not because women are lacking. There are plenty of women with qualifications and experience. Everywhere I have been most dominant executives are males. Even in the recruitment process, men are likely to exclude women because they are the ones in senior positions. Men could easily go into certain positions. (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

8.2.3.2. Maintenance of hierarchies

Organizations that are dominated by black Africans, similar to other organizations, also have organizational cultures that promote a cultural ideal of a good and competent employee (Stephens et al., 2015). Individuals who want to experience upward mobility in this context need to assimilate into the cultures of their organizations and engage in the interactional styles that gatekeepers find comfortable (Townsend & Troung, 2017):

A lot of people just assimilate into the environment. They have a certain culture of doing things. A lot of people would just slot into that culture. And sometimes it is not always ethically the right thing to do. But ultimately the decisions lie with the people who manage the organization. If anyone assimilates, they are likely to be promoted (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

LM: Is there a prototype of people who occupy senior positions in this environment?
LK: It's mostly males in my current organization. It's mostly male people whom I often find to not have ***(long pause).*** You know if you are an integrated person. Your view in your personal life, in your family and at work will be the same. It looks like their views on certain things change because they are in that role. They can't be fully themselves and they have to bend with the wind.
LM: May you please give me an example so that I can get more context?
LK: I remember I was frustrated with something and I was voicing out my concern with my director on a report. This report is going to get out and I am very worried. And it needs more work to go into it. He was telling me yes, this is what I am dealing with. This

> is the culture. I understand your frustrations. Nothing really gets ironed out in meetings or in anything. So we are back to square one. It never gets resolved. It gets acknowledged in private spaces but it doesn't get resolved in an open platform. This doesn't happen again or in future, we can get better. Pick up your socks. I am still transitioning into government.
> (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> LM: What have you observed people doing so that they can get ahead in the workplace?
> LN: The others have aligned themselves with those that are powerful enough to make decisions. Those that are powerful enough to progress them basically to the next title or promotion.
> (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

Participants in this study indicated that gatekeepers in this context expected their subordinates to not have different opinions. These participants further indicated that hierachies in their organizations were maintained at an interactional level and acts of dominance were more personalized toward an individual:

> They talk negatively about the person. They decampaign the person. They give you useless work that won't help you grow. To be fair, some of these people don't know any better. They have not been exposed. They have big positions but they have not achieved much. I find what they do. They manage by fear. They manage by authority. It is not management by dreaming, envisioning and giving direction. By inspiring. It's not goal orientated. They are trying to secure themselves. And secure their power by not giving meaningful work. And if you don't have meaningful work as someone who reports to them. You are never going to grow (Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> Others are being victimised. You will sit there and not get ahead and they will make sure that you don't progress any further unless you do as you are told. People are embarrassed in public meetings and platforms and things like that (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> I work in government so there is a lot of sidelining. There is a lot of elimination. So people could alienate you in spaces where you should be. Just because they don't agree

> with your principles and the stances you have taken (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

Research participants in this study further indicated that gender hierarchies were maintained through a narrative that suggested that women were Affirmative Action candidates or not good enough to occupy senior positions. The cultural narrative of the incompetence of Affirmative Action beneficiaries is usually racialised in South Africa with all black Africans having low levels of competence (Durrheim et al., 2007; Magopeni, 2014; Reuben & Bobat, 2014). In organizations dominated by black Africans this narrative excludes black African males who are at the helm of these organizations:

> ……And when you lack something, it is always easy for them to say these are Affirmative Action candidates. Even your subordinates don't respect you much. They say she just got the position because she is a woman. I always say when women get positions they must show that they are not Affirmative Action candidates. I hate this thing of Affirmative Action because people think I was given extra points as a woman. I was better on ordinary points. There are no extra points for Affirmative Action (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> LM: You said you stay out of spaces where you are not wanted, which spaces are those?
> NH: Executive leadership, senior management. Once you start talking about women empowerment in that space, everybody asks have women empowered themselves. The conversation changes. Once men are in those spaces nobody even questions if they are equipped to be in that space. When you talk of levelling the ground for women, people will ask are women even well equipped? Are women academically and emotionally equipped to be in that space? On and on. So there is a lot of changing of goalposts when it comes to letting women in those spaces (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

The report issued by the Commission for Employment Equity (2019) mentions that black African women are overrepresented in the professionally qualified population group by eight per cent (8%) in the public service sector. This report corroborates the assertion made by research participants in this study that black African women can access professional positions

in work contexts dominated by other black Africans but they struggle to progress to the top and senior management positions (Townsend &Troung, 2017). These participants indicated that gender stereotypes were sometimes used to justify the legitimacy of the genderized hierarchies:

> LM: Please tell me what kind of people in the organizations that you have worked in are most likely to occupy senior positions?
> RK: ***(laughs)*** Male. And from different levels where I have been. I worked in agriculture for many years. The story would be agriculture is an area for men. The executives were largely male. When I was appointed to an executive position, there were only two women at that level. It was myself and another woman and we were appointed one month apart. We were the first women and that was in 2007. Imagine before that the executive only had males. The women were at lower levels. The idea was that farming was for males and that is the reason why males occupied executive positions. It wasn't true. When you look at the bottom structures, you would find women sitting in lower positions as specialists. Hindering the progress of women was deliberate (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> As a woman, you should be aggressive. What is seen as emotional is also subjective to what they perceive. They could describe illogical thinking as being emotional. And different to my belief system. I believe that if you are in construction, you first have to be empathetic to people you work with and you also have to understand how your work affects the community which you are building for. Those things don't happen in a vacuum. They don't work outside of emotions. The way it is perceived is that you should not work with emotions. Put your emotions aside. So, you have to channel a set of aggressive behaviours. And you have to not care, even in areas where you have to care about people. If there are complaints from people at a blue-collar level. If you show concern and you understand their concerns, people think you are not fit for the environment. You shouldn't care for complaints that people have. If you can assimilate and to show less care for people even when you are supposed to show care, you are deemed as a leader (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

Furthermore, women were kept in their place in this context through sexual harassment. Sexual harassment takes place when a person who is in a senior position makes sexual

advances to a junior staff member (Paludi et al., 1999). Sexual harassment includes gender harassment where sexist remarks are made to degrade others, seductive behaviour where inappropriate and offensive sexual advances are made to a junior staff member and sexual bribery where a junior staff member is promised a reward if he/she engages in sexual activity (Paludi et al., 1999). Sexual harassment also includes coercion where a person is punished for refusing to engage in sexual activities and sexual imposition which involves physical force such as rape or assault (Paludi et al., 1999):

> LM: What strategies have you observed gatekeepers using to limit the careers of others?
> KM: In one other context, like they would limit the growth of ladies through sexual harassment like kind of issues where young ladies would be exploited. That would be the challenge.
> LM: If the lady doesn't agree to the advances, then?
> KM: Yes, you realize that the system is trying to push them down.
> (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> Let me share my personal experience. I was told in my instance that I will not get a promotion unless I was prepared to do certain things ***(Sexual favours).*** So although there is no sabotage per se on my work. But certainly, unless I am prepared to do certain things, I will not get a promotion. You make peace with that. You do what you are expected to do at your level. You don't have ambitions of going forward or you do what you are asked to do so that you can get ahead (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> I once worked for Company X where the HR manager was a black ***(African)*** woman and I was reporting directly to a black ***(African)*** man and the offices were being renovated. So we were actually booked into this small office and I had to share an office with my boss. And we had to book boardrooms across the road at a hotel because the hotel allowed us to use their boardrooms and he wanted me to book a particular date. And I confirmed the next day. He came to me and said to me, is the ***bedroom (my emphasis)*** booked? And I just looked at him and thought this guy is weird. I did not like what he insinuated. So when I went to the HR manager being a black (***African***) woman and I was a black (***African)*** woman, and I said, this is what he said, and I'm very unhappy and uncomfortable. I was like in my 20s and also young and naive. Her response was you

> should know how black ***(African)*** men are, after all, you are a black ***(African)*** person. So she didn't take my grievance (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

8.3.ADOPTED STRATEGIES

Workplaces are fields that require participants to adapt to changing conditions, people and processes (Calhoun, 2003). Those who navigate these contexts operate within objective structures that have rules, dominant groups who try to preserve their power and historically produced positions for different players (Wacquant, 2006). Individuals who navigate work contexts are also constrained by their dispositions, mobility beliefs and the capital that they bring into a field (Calhoun, 2003). Hence, navigating the work context successfully cannot be based on a formula but it is a process that involves getting a feel for the game, moving forward through trial and error and constantly improvising as situations change (Lamaison & Bourdieu, 1986). Maton (2008) further states that it takes time, experience and making mistakes to understand the implicit rules of the game in a field. There were research participants in this study who shared the sentiment that strategies had to be improvised in response to changing environmental conditions (Calhoun, 2003). Some participants also indicated that the strategies that they used in the past no longer worked in their current environment:

> Sometimes the work environment can be a very funny environment. A lot of things can work but it is horses for courses (Mpho, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> Getting back into the world of work, you realize or I just held that view that when white people like you it's because you make them look good. Not necessarily that you are a great person. You realize that not all blacks are in your corner. And sometimes the people at the top are not necessarily people who are good at something. So you now need to tap into twenty thousand other skills. Speaking to white people and asking them about their day. You need to speak about dogs. You need to speak about cats ***(laughs)*** (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

….hard work has gotten me where I am but it has not moved me to the next space. The requirements from where I am to the next place are different (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

8.3.1. Know where you are going.

Yagasban (2019) found that ethnic or racial minorities in his study who entered workplaces with a vision of what they wanted to achieve were more likely to find ways to overcome obstacles in their environments. Calhoun (2003) also argued that individuals who engaged passionately in an activity were likely to be committed to attaining their goals by improving on their limitations and addressing structural barriers. Furthermore, Phillips et al. (2020b) argued that individuals who know where they are going are likely to consider and acquire the capital that will assist them to reach their destined goal. According to Bourdieu (1986), there is a cost to social mobility as it takes time to acquire cultural capital, a certain level of economic capital is required to access some opportunities and there is also a need to engage in acts of continuous reciprocity to build up social capital. Research participants in this study indicated that some of their career moves were planned and others were based on taking advantage of opportunities that were available in the environment:

LM: Looking at your career, would say you are someone who has let his career unfold or are you a planner?
KM: To some extent, I didn't. It is a bit of both. Sometimes I would fall into things and make them work. The career that I initially planned didn't work out and I had to work with plan B.
(Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

LM: Would you say you have planned where you are or did your career unfold?
MM: It was a mixed bag. There are decisions that I took to find myself at a certain place and at other times, I just found myself where I was.
(Mpho, middle-class, multiple schools, manager)

There were also research participants who stated that career plans had to be held loose as some goals might require a higher level of capital investment than initially anticipated. The process of signalling fit might also be protracted as gatekeepers introduce informal requirements when making decisions about members of groups that are stereotyped as incompetent (Connelly et al., 2011):

> In my first career, I planned my progression and what I would be doing at different times. In five years, I will possibly be in this position. And I did all things according to the plan and even engaged the organization that this is where I want to go and they fully agreed. But the steps we needed to do, they were not coming forward in terms of support. And that created a conflict in me. On one hand, whilst they were not bringing what they said they would bring to the table. My responsibilities were acknowledged in terms of giving me more work. But not matching that with what we had agreed. That once you have done these things, this is what will happen. I went through; I stayed for five years in the same position whilst working for the organization. Without any promotion. But with more responsibilities. And my fellow white colleagues ended up being my seniors. And almost every year, they were getting promoted. But in terms of the work, they will come to me to get more information on how to do things. I felt that was not working for me. Here I am doing a plan but I am not being acknowledged for it. And by virtue of getting more responsibilities, it was an acknowledgement that I grew in that position. I am competent and they were trusting me with the responsibilities. But they could not acknowledge me in terms of the things we spoke about. And in terms of promotions that were due. As compared to the white colleagues. They got promotions and they had fewer responsibilities than me at that time (Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools, specialist).

> I see with colleagues that I have met internationally, it is so easy for them to switch careers. It is hard to change jobs. I had to quit my job and go do my Masters in order to be accepted in a new field. It was a movement from one speciality to another but I had to get a Masters to prove that I belong in this field. Whereas overseas you find people who are in different areas of work writing articles about different areas of work. The door was open to them and they were moved. Here there is so much red tape. To transition from one place to the next. If I wanted to change my speciality, I don't think I would have it easy. I would have to do another degree if I wanted to change my speciality. Overseas it's so easy. It's like you have to give people so many things before they can accept your

> transition. But with white people, there is no red tape like that. They can. You are like you are from this background and you made it here, how did that happen? They will say somebody just said join in and here I am. I had to strategically map it out. Like this is my next step (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).
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8.3.2. Understand the rules of the game

One of the common themes mentioned by research participants in this study was that the school system which had a meritocratic ranking system did not prepare these participants for the world of work. The school system had a criteria of success that was clearly set, teachers allocated students positions on the hierarchy based on objective criteria and there was agreement that those who were at the top of the hierarchy deserved to be there. Schubert (2014) argues that the school system is not meritocratic but the criteria that is used in this environment has been naturalized and those who are advantaged and disadvantaged by this criteria regard it as legitimate (Barrett,2015). Those who are at the top of the hierarchy believe that they are naturally superior and those at the bottom take responsibility for their low position (Schubert, 2014):

> At a young age, you felt that the one who is smarter, is the one who is most successful. This is why at a later stage, it becomes such a shock later in life, when you meet the person who was the naughtiest child, and they are so successful. And vice versa, you meet someone who is brilliant and they can't get into a job. So, they build perceptions very soon (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> For people who were overachieving, it does not necessarily translate to that they were diligent. Some people had more resources to be better. Just because someone was an A student at school it doesn't mean that those were the most diligent in the workplace. And a pretty average person, a C student, could be much more relatable and diligent and could climb to management higher than the A student. Because they can relate to people and they can adapt to that environment. That's what I learnt to not be the case (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

Authorities in the school context maintain order and regulate interactions between students whereas gatekeepers in the workplace are active players in the field (Wacquant, 2006). They are involved in competitive games played in the workplace as they do not want to lose their dominant position (Wacquant, 2006):

> Most people are trying to see who can I keep underneath me so that I can see where I am because the more people pass me, the lower I go, and that's kind of what corporate is. I was reading a business book the other day and one of the business leaders was saying that it's become dog eat dog. And it's interesting that they use that dog eat dog ***(emphasis***), and that describes corporates, you like, you have to fight for survival. It's not like I've come to give service. It's like a gauntlet match, you have to fight for survival, which is interesting and sad… I think the challenge with corporate is I have to get something by breaking somebody down. And unfortunately, corporate seems like that. In order for people to get to a space, they feel like they have to have done someone in. The phrase that is used is throwing someone under the bus or taking someone off at their knees. And funny enough this has crept into becoming business vocabulary, the way people are throwing each other under the bus (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).
>
> ***(Long pause).*** Unfortunately, the world is not modelled ***(interrupts self),*** okay I work in finance. The world is not modelled according to Catholicism ***(meritocracy).*** There is a lot of jealousy and what they call corporate jealousy. I am not sure what is professional about what is called corporate jealousy. And there are many liabilities in terms of the corporate world (Thabang, middle-class, black African students-multiracial teachers, senior specialist).

According to Calhoun (2003), people are not held back in most systems through force but they are held back through seemingly fair practices that give members of the dominant group better probabilities of succeeding in certain undertakings when compared to members of subordinate groups. Some participants in this study argued that to experience career progression in certain fields, people needed to understand how the criteria used in the environment disadvantaged them and then find ways to circumvent it:

I need to refer you to a book a colleague sent me. Black in white skin. It is written by Elijah Anderson. Elijah is the top whatever at a university wherever. The book says if you want to survive in a white space, know your place. The minute you know your place, you will know how to dilute the white space. If we come into this white space, whether we like it or not, the university space is run in a white way. The university where I am now is even worse. …Based on the white space, they have a thing of coining the space to exactly what is needed. If you can understand how they operate in their white space. You have them all. You can get whatever you want to have….Let me give you an example, the NRF rating. The NRF rating is for everybody in South Africa. They give these criteria. When we go for ratings, they look at our CVs. They know our CVs. I have been at the same university for X number of years. And they can see I only collaborate with colleagues from historically black universities. They do not see international collaborators there. It's obvious, I will never be rated. I will never be rated. That criterion is designed for specific people. However, now NRF has a block for black academics. You see, there are very few black Africans rated by NRF (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools, executive).

I am at that level in business given my diverse exposure and the diverse companies that I have worked for. I can actually start navigating and networking outside my department. For example, if I see that the gatekeepers have made it clear that I am not going to move within a department. I can network outside my department. I could work in diverse areas of the business. Because my function can be found in every area of the business. So what I do is ensure that whatever is expected of me is done here. I don't rely on them for my career progression. Because it is a massive company. You can also start looking outside the country for building your networks (Vuyokazi, middle-class,black African schools, executive).

LM: Have you used the same strategies or are there other strategies that you use?
LK: I have also used other strategies. I have used other strategies such as serving on boards. Building my professional network. That lends me to things that I use and rope back into my organization. In my professional work, I would meet a professional who specializes in something. And make the link that the company may need this. Then I may bring them in, in the form of them giving a talk or something to get buy-in from the company and seal a working relationship. So, in that way my volunteer work helps me. It helps me to get exposure to people I look up to in the industry who happen to be actively involved in those volunteer organizations. And also to know what is happening in my field. I always have my pulse on what is about to happen. If it is about to happen, I am

most likely to be in the room with those people. The who's who in the industry and I will be able to build a connection or grow my network. It helps my professional network. And it builds my network.

LM: So, you operate inside and outside your organization?

LK: Yes, that mostly started when I was not getting recognition at work. I thought it was time ***(interrupts self)*** I needed to get recognition. I was struggling through the cracks of getting recognized. Seeing that I have checked all the boxes. They were giving me hoops to jump through and things that I had done were worded as if I had not done them. So I had to go outside and build that and bring it in. Mixed it up and also got a sponsor. If you get an external sponsor and they see you at work and they say I know her. People say okay. They start looking at you differently.

(Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

I am not sure what other people did but I will tell you what I did. I kept on studying. In government, when you are at an executive level ***(interrupts self).*** They didn't approve my bursary. They only give bursaries to people at lower levels. They would say the qualification you want to study is not related to the work, according to them. I always said I am not studying for anybody but myself. I will not stop studying because I did not get a bursary. …..When they say there is a conference somewhere, if my employer does not want to pay. I will pay and go myself. I ended up being so empowered that whoever wants to ignore me would end up exposing themselves. People would say looking at people that you are comparing her with she is far above in terms of qualifications, experience and everything you may think of. So I always make sure I empower myself with the little money that I have. When it comes to self-employment, I am not acquiring a set of qualifications so that I can get a promotion. I am doing it for me. This is an area where women need to be deliberate. If people ignore me, I am going to study. They will be forced ultimately to recognize me. They will be forced ultimately. Because they would be exposing themselves. There is nothing to hide behind. They can't say you lack this or you lack that (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

8.3.3. Understand Your Position

8.3.3.1.Dominant vs subordinate group

Social hierarchies are historically produced and over time participants in a field perceive these hierarchies to be natural and beyond questioning (Deer, 2014). These hierarchies are maintained by narratives that elevate and disparage some groups, practices in the field that accord different social advantages to participants and stereotypes that members of society have internalized regarding others (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). Members of different groups are allocated positions in a system and individuals who are out of place are likely to surprise, threaten or create discomfort in those already in the field (Carrim, 2012; Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). When members of the dominant group feel threatened or uncomfortable, they engage in acts that will maintain hierarchies in the workplace (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). The Bourdieusian Approach uses the metaphor of a fish in the water to reflect the ease with which people who meet requirements in a field navigate the environment (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Maton, 2008). Coles (2020, p.34) states that a fish out of water is a " frightened creature, thrashing about aimlessly without strategy and direction":

> It's almost like the system doesn't understand. What, how did you almost survive the system? Because the system sometimes, I'm not saying ***(interrupts self),*** maybe it is unfair to come to this conclusion, but it's almost like it's set up to trip some people and work for others. It doesn't work for all. And if you make it through, by whatever grace you make it through, it is almost like you always have to justify or answer how you got two or three steps further. So it's almost like a surprise, like how are you here? (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

> . …. As a woman, I am very much aware if I want to infiltrate that level ***(executive),*** it's going to take a lot more than knowledge and qualifications. It is going to take determination (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

Participants who had work experience in both black-African dominated and white-dominated organizations indicated that their position on hierarchies used in an organization influenced

how they were perceived by others. In black-dominated organizations they started from a base where they were assumed to be competent whilst in white-dominated environments they started from a position where they were seen as incompetent (Anderson, 2015):

> Working in those two different spaces, in the black space, I never felt once that I am an impostor and that I don't belong. I don't deserve ***(interrupts self)*** or I am in the wrong ***(interrupts self)*** or I am punching ***(interrupts self)*** because the atmosphere is more relaxed. I feel like I am punching below my weight. In a white corporate space, I had to constantly prove and reprove to myself that I have got this and fight against all the subtle comments that suggest that I am not good even though my work is good and you can see in a way it's being used and received. They also try to put a lid on you to try and cage you. Don't try and go out too much. Stay there and play with your mind in that sense. I constantly had to constantly lift that cap off my head. I had to say I am enough. I am as good even better so that it doesn't hamper on my confidence and delivery which was sometimes a problem because they didn't understand where I got it from. Even on stuff that they knew I didn't have years of working experience on. Those were the two dynamics (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> The black organizations were mainly backed up by the government. They were willing to gives us the opportunity to grow. Whereas with white companies you are treated as a student suspiciously and your knowledge is forever questioned and for a long time. There are always question marks about your knowledge base. I was lucky I went to work at a time ***(long pause)*** when there was Affirmative Action. They would give you a title. At the time, there was still a fear of the black government. They were willing to accelerate us but the experience was always uncomfortable. Whereas with black organizations, you will be treated with respect (Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive).

Female research participants who worked in organizations dominated by other black Africans further mentioned that their gender was a barrier in this context whereas male participants who worked in the same environments perceived that this context offered good opportunities for career growth:

> It's a culture that promotes growth and independence. You are given meaningful responsibilities. Most of the work is done independently. It has its own issues when it

> comes to dynamics where it is mostly about personality clashes. But otherwise, it is okay and it is functional (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> …… It's only in the past few years that we experienced a lot of lapses. People not taking pride in the kind of work that they do. Whereas with white firms, white people are much much more professional. Much more focused. And goal orientated. They are not about that position for ourselves. Overall, black companies still offer good opportunities (Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive).

The below excerpt from Phillip (middle-class, multiracial schools, manager) demonstrates that sometimes cultural understanding rather than social identity markers such as race or gender influenced whether someone became part of a dominant or subordinate group:

> LM: What are the differences and similarities between organizations that were dominated by white people and black Africans?
> PM: With the white people it's more flexible. They are clear on the division of labour and what needs to be accomplished. They give you a lot of independence. Whereas with black organizations they hold back information. It's like they are scared that if you grow you will become better than them. That sense of insecurity. The white guys are more open. The black guys are afraid that you will leave them and establish your own organization which does not make sense.

8.3.3.2.Moral relational aspects

According to Piff et al. (2018), perceptions that people have about how upward career mobility is achieved can influence whether these individuals seek top positions or not. Townsend and Troung (2017) state that management literature has continually demonstrated that those who advance in organizations use an ingratiation interactional style and political skills to facilitate their career success. Piff et al. (2018) further state that some of the behaviours required for career progression might be unattractive to people who eschew attaining career progression by being cunning or engaging in actions that could potentially harm other people. Some of these individuals are also uncomfortable developing self-serving

relationships where other people are seen as resources that can be deployed to facilitate career progression (Townsend & Troung, 2017). Individuals who are socialized in interdependent cultures are most likely to be uncomfortable with engaging in Machiavellian behaviours as they are socialized to value warmth in relationships (Carrim, 2012; Piff et al., 2018; Townsend & Troung, 2017):

> I think it's very dangerous to lose yourself in a system that is fleeting and the rules change all the time. So if you don't have a true north or if you don't have an anchor that you can look up to, and that can sort of help you keep your feet on the ground. That's why we will have these wishy-washy kinds of people in the organization. And I suppose it leads to trust. One minute they say this, the next minute they are saying that. I always say people like that or spaces like that are dangerous places to be. So what I learned from myself, is why it is important to be yourself. That's why it's important to know what you believe in. That's why it is important to fight for that. And then when you are comfortable with fighting and knowing who you are, then you can show up for that organization as best as you can. But we finding people that are trying to please five different people at the same time, and it's not sustainable (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).
>
> It’s like an unhealthy dance ***(relationship with gatekeepers).*** You still dance to the rhythm but you also need to be aware at what point this has crossed the line, it has crossed my ethics. I am going to say no to things that I don’t believe in or that are making me look like I am yes for everything. Go do this, yes. Just to get a level up. I will make sure they know what type of person I am. They know my values and they know what type of person I am. They cannot come to me with anything and think that she will say yes even though it is nonsense. They really knew. I was principled. There were certain things I would not do and I would put it to you properly. This is why I can’t do this. I was principled but it was hard for them to play me dirty (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).
>
> LM: What do you think got you to be where you are?
> TB: Integrity will be one of them. I would put that at the top. Keeping your word is important when it comes to the work environment. Being curious and consistent with your messages. You know the four agreements be impeccable with your words, determination to succeed and because of my background and how I grew up, I am the

greatest people warrior. I will fight for a person that cannot fight for themselves (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

Very few participants admitted to using an ingratiation interactional style and no participants indicated that they behaved in a Machiavellian way when in the workplace. Participants in this study, however, did mention that they had observed others engaging in disingenuous behaviour to get ahead in the workplace:

> Gatekeepers are really something else. You need to interlink what I said about people who went to former model C schools and interacted a lot with white people. You will generally find that those people, gatekeepers are kind to those people. They have assimilated, they are white. They are just like gatekeepers. When you have actually not assimilated to become a white person. And you are radical like me, gatekeepers don't like those things. Gatekeepers want to be loved. They want to see you agree to everything. It is important that you need to realize that you need to find a way of pleasing gatekeepers. Some of the things are ridiculous. You end up going to the restaurants that they go to and eating some of the food that they eat and saying they are nice when they are not. It is ridiculous those things. You might think that those things are not pertinent. But it is part and parcel of assimilating. You don't assimilate and you see gatekeepers not warming up to you. The work environment is not necessarily different to a political environment. People think that they are different, but they are not. There are a lot of different politics going on in this environment. You need to be able to navigate politics (Mpho, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> LM: What strategies have you observed people using to advance in their careers?
> KM: They use manipulation, backstabbing and exploiting underdogs. Exploiting students to write things for them and use that as their own work.
> (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> LM: What strategies have you observed people using to advance in their careers?
> TK: Good morning how was your weekend? How is your cat? How is your dog? ***(Fake upbeat voice).*** That is a working strategy right there. You are like guys, what ***(laughs).*** Once in a while, be the person who contributes nothing in the meeting but who just before the meeting ends says, so that we are all on the same page and we are concluding. That worked for someone ***(laughs).*** Being busybodies, lockdown exposed a lot of busybodies.

> There are some of us ***(interrupts self),*** I am not a busybody. I get there and work. Some people need to be seen that they are working. They will walk around, eish you know the work. The busybodies got exposed. Now it's about results. We are working from home. Nobody sees if you are in the office. Sometimes people use the get in early and leave late strategy to move up. Even when there are minimal things you get from them. I think also the talking of the English. Sounding like them sometimes. The refined English that we blacks ***(interrupts self),*** I call it the reading English. Always being ever available. There is a project, oh let me help.
> (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> LM: What have you observed people doing in order to get ahead?
> MM: … So being a spy, can make you get ahead. There are people who get ahead by just being snitches. By telling the boss what other people are doing. That is something that should not be undermined, in my view ***(with emphasis).*** I think that plays a big role (Mpho, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

8.3.3.3. Relationship with gatekeepers

Martin and Côté (2019) state that individuals who share similar experiences, outlooks ,values and norms are likely to find it easier to develop and maintain relationships when compared to those who are dissimilar. Some research participants indicated that they had good relationships with gatekeepers in their current environment whereas other participants narrated stories where they had good relationships with gatekeepers in environments where they had previously worked. These gatekeepers provided social capital to research participants in the current study as they operated under someone's wing. This made the work environment more safe and predictable as most of these participants stated that their superiors had confidence in their abilities and they were given the support to advance their careers (Townsend & Truong, 2017):

> With my immediate supervisor, we get along. He has always been interested in my development and my development plans. Hence, I am doing an MBA. I have been

working for him for five years. It was something that we drew up a long time ago. That this is the plan and this is when we will finish. In terms of my immediate boss, we get along. I do not have any issues with the leaders. It is an advantage when your immediate boss is active and supports you. Also has a conversation with people at his level about you and acts as your sponsor (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

It is very good ***(relationship with gatekeepers).*** It helps. The senior who is considered to be a gatekeeper is close to me. He is very much involved and wants us to grow, that is the thing. He promotes that (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

Oh, you know, at the beginning of working in corporate. I worked with a gentleman by the name of John Pearson, he was such an amazing human being. I don't know if, well, it used to be that he was British. So I don't know. The familiarity of cultures is what made us work so well together, but when I observed, it was not just with myself, but with the team, he was incredibly protective of his team. He was a true manager and I think that's where I learned about good leadership. He would say things like I am as strong as my weakest link instead of making his weakest link feel weak, he would empower his team. And even though you made a mistake, he would say we've made a mistake. Maybe, I didn't explain it properly. So, let's see where we dropped the ball and let's fix it together. Even if he had to explain it to you, then you got to fix it on your own, but he never ever ostracized you or made you feel like you don't measure up. And he did that with people of all races. And he did that regardless of where you were in the hierarchy (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

Then I got a temp job at company B, there the boss just saw someone who was a very hyperactive child and took a risk. And fortunately, that boss became my boss at Company C. He took me from Company B. I was that child who is inquisitive and he loved that. When I go to him, he would put his hands on his head and say what now. I was that child. At Company D, they liked my English. I still had the same position. But there I had no future. I was never going to have a future. We even had a case there. I went to Company E under the boss who was my boss at Company B and Company C. I think Gregory has always had incredible faith in me (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

Some research participants in this study who operated at a level where they had positional power to change the capital requirements in the field indicated that they engaged in activities

that aimed to address social injustices experienced by the groups that they valued. Other participants who had knowledge that gatekeepers did not have, advanced their position by keeping this information from gatekeepers. According to the Bourdieusian Approach, members of the dominant group fight to maintain their dominance in a field whereas members of subordinate groups seek to change the distribution of capital and opportunities within a field (Bourdieu, 1986; Thomson, 2014).

> When I was appointed, I was lucky. The department had appointed a woman who was an executive in the corporate space. She was deliberate in that she wanted to increase the representation of women at senior levels. We started a management development programme to assist women to advance in the department. To build them so they can access management positions. The women would come in as scientists and men were comfortable keeping them there. They would be scientists and told that they did not have management experience. Where would they get management experience if they are not given access to managerial positions? You will not get it anywhere. Women were said to be more suitable in technical positions, we started a programme to prepare women for management and to create a talent pipeline. Executives are still men. Slightly more men but developments are coming along (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> When you are a HOD, you are given an EXCO for eight years. Not in my case, in my case I have rotational leadership. I told my EXCO, you are here for two years. After two years, I want some others. I want everybody in my department to know, what it entails to manage a learning programme. What does it entail to manage a research programme. What does it entail to manage an education and learning programme. I did that because of my experience. I came into the department; I was never in those positions. I looked at what they were doing. I could not give input. The HOD of that time will say, I want this person in my EXCO for eight years. They were afraid and guarding their territory. I am not afraid of that. This position I got because I am qualified. I am expanding and multiplying it. That is the reason I opted for a cooperative leadership style. Next year, we will be having new managers. For the coming six months, those who are in these positions are allowed to choose and teach new ones. This is how I work (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> How I do my skills transfer, it's always that little girl that grew up in SOWETO at the back of my mind saying give them what you never had. It is a grudge weight. It is that person sending a CV and you knowing that they will never get a job with it. And somehow it lands; I just believe in destiny, it will land in your box instead of your team to work with. It is teaching my team that if someone's CV lands on your desk and it looks like this, send them a good template. Tell them you are not going to get far with this template, it starts there. It is that person coming back after two years and saying after I changed my CV, I started getting interview requests. Not with your company but you have been that person that helped them and it doesn't even take two minutes to say this is the template that we think grabs attention. These are the templates that grab the eye. We are in HR; we know what grabs the eye (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> TT: The golden rule is that I don't give them any information. That's all. If you have information and they need the information, you can control them.
> LM: So, information about work.
> TT: Information about the journals that we publish in.
> (Thabang, middle-class, black African students-multiracial teachers, senior specialist).

Some research participants in this study who perceived that their current work environment was not safe kept their distance from gatekeepers. These participants focused on meeting the task requirements of their roles but they did not actively build relationships with gatekeepers. This position was a protective stance that allowed research participants to maintain their position in the short term but this position limited career progression in the long term (Townsend & Truong, 2017):

> BM: I've always been from a younger age, just to do my job as best as I can, but I also understand to have healthy boundaries. I am not here to have unnecessary relationships with anybody actually. I come to work and do the best that I can. I ask questions only when I need to ask questions. I do not try to be in anybody's ear. And in fact, I discourage people from coming to tell me, things. You know, I think the least I know about the politics of things ***(interrupts self).*** I think for me, I am here for the work. So I need to focus on the work and the minute I start getting deterred or getting involved in he said,

she said, or people trying to get up the ladder and stepping on as many people as possible, it's kind of like where I draw the line. I don't want to be part of that it's politicking.

LM: And, does it, has it maybe disadvantaged you in any way?

BM: It does. It does. Cause I think the question kind of almost seems to be like, ***(interrupts self),*** it provokes certain people, you know, some people like to get their egos brushed. People always say you got to talk the talk. So be strategic. You' must have the right people on your side and all kinds of other schools of thought. That goes back to my upbringing. This is why you can't divorce yourself from your upbringing. My upbringing was with achievement and doing the best through performance. So my platform of performance is the work side of things. My platform of performance is not trying to get as many people as possible to like me.

(Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

LM: How would you define your relationship with the influential people in your organization?

PM: I will say it is a relationship that is based on doing the work. For instance, I don't know their personal lifestyles. And I don't open up about my personal lifestyle to them. But what I work on is on our work-related issues.

(Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools, specialist).

LM: How is your relationship with gatekeepers in your organization?

LD: It is just okay. It is not excellent. It is just okay. We are tolerating each other, I guess.

LM: What strategies have you used to maintain or advance your career?

LD: You just need to do your job. Meet your targets and deadlines. Just do your job, that's it. That is the only thing then you are sorted.

(Lebohang, working-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

Other research participants who did not feel safe in their work environments adopted an interactional style that was characterized by cordiality and sometimes shrewdness. These research participants maintained a protective stance by having cordial relationships with gatekeepers that were managed by clear boundaries that could not be crossed. This interactional pattern enabled research participants to avoid having hostile relations with gatekeepers as they adhered to some of the accepted norms in their environments (Carter, 2003; Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Travis & Thorpe-Moscon, 2018):

I can't talk about Knysna with white people. I don't know at some point I closed myself to those types of relationships. I will know your children are Johann and Marilyn and I will know they are at the University of Pretoria. I will know Marilyn bumped her car. I will have those conversations because you need to forge a connection with your white colleagues. It is always deeper with your kin. You ask is your uncle at work today? Knowing very well we are talking about the CFO. It is always deeper with your kin. I guess the era we were brought up in. You know our kids are in a class with Marigold so to them Marigold is a friend. It's a constant crossing of the floor. It's always a hat that you wear when you walk into the space. I am in the space now, there is a layer of protection that you put up that I will not be putting up with my kin (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

It takes knowing the environment that you are in. Knowing the rules and playing by the rules. If you have taken a position, you have a cordial relationship with them. You know when they want work done; it's going to be done. Work-wise, it's very professional. And there is no bad relationship. I know who I am. This is what I can give you and it ends there (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

It's indifferent because I don't think I pose a threat to them. I am also at a place where I am raising children and my focus is on job security. I am not trying to shoot up and be a CEO or a COO. I am very content where I am and I do what needs to be done to the best of my abilities with diligence and integrity. It looks good for them that things can be executed. Even if they take the shine, I don't mind. It's very indifferent and amicable because I don't pose a threat to them (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

It's a balancing act that needs one to be very cunning. You never really know the amount of power that a gatekeeper really has. They always overestimate their importance and power. It is a matter of doing your own intelligence work as well sometimes. Not to take what they share with me from decision-makers as the gospel. It is cunningly managing them. Senior gatekeepers are very dangerous if they are senior and they have a better relationship than you with their immediate senior that has the final say (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools, executive).

8.3.4. Choose the Correct Mobility Strategy

Edgerton and Roberts (2014) state that when using a Bourdieusian Approach actions of others cannot be understood outside of hierarchies in a context, the position of individuals on the hierarchies and the dispositions of these individuals. Members of society cannot use available strategies equally (Wacquant, 2006). Some strategies cannot be deployed because they are unsuitable for certain environments, other strategies are out of reach because the level and composition of capital possessed by some individuals is insufficient and other strategies are not in the realm of choice because individuals have not been exposed to them or they are outside their moral-relational position (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014; Piff et al., 2018). There are also strategies that are regarded as illegitimate when used by members of certain groups (Martin & Côté , 2019).

8.3.4.1. Build and Maintain Relationships

Individuals who want to experience upward career mobility must have in their key networks donors who give them professional advice, ambassadors who promote them in different forums and confidants that they can share their career challenges (Rezai, 2017). Building and maintaining good relationships with others enabled some research participants in this study to access valuable information and career opportunities:

> The biggest lesson I have learnt is that your background doesn't always matter. You must remain focused and use the little information that you have to your advantage. Because I always knew that I don't have the advantage of knowledge, vast knowledge. I would use the little knowledge that I have. I took interest in conversing with people. For instance, I remember one time when I started working for a bank. I partnered with a guy who was an advisor to one of the former presidents in South Africa. But I wanted to know what made them ***(white people)*** tick. Whether we like it or not, they ***(white people)*** did design a system that is going to be with us forever. I took an interest and spent time with him.

> When everyone goes to lunch, I would want to have conversations with this guy. And then I would take those insights that I learnt from him to position my knowledge base (Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> To get this job, I offered. Because it was my old job, I ran the reports from where I was sitting. It's lockdown and I am bored. The incumbent in the job had Covid and was sick. I said I can step in and help you guys. I didn't think anything of it and I was just bored. When the position came up that manager was like I want you. I don't know if it's planning but I never planned to go back to that area. I think it was luck meeting opportunity and me being the type of person who says if you need me, I can help you (Thato, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).

> In corporate, having a sponsor helped me and pushed me into the right projects I wanted to work on. Also, giving me the experience and exposure I needed to move up in my role. This was only possible via a sponsor. You can shout all you want that you want to be on this project. If they don't put you, they don't put you. You won't get to be on a project. A sponsor also helped (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> One thing that I learnt throughout is the importance of networking. And keeping relationships. A guy I was with in my MBA class for two years was on the interview panel of my current job. The importance of relationships. Just being a decent person to other people. Keeping relationships. I have got many examples. When I was heading up a fund, it was part of their merger conditions. When I arrived they were behind on their conditions. The regulator was on their case and when I went to negotiate with the regulator, he was in my MBA class as well. The importance of relationships and I managed to negotiate with him. Because of the relationship we had forged during the MBA. It was easy for him to give us a chance. Even though the previous incumbent had broken promises. The regulator gave me a chance because he knew me from class. Relationship building and networking. Just ensuring that you keep decent relations with people (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools, executive).

Rezai (2017) further states that individuals who want to experience upward career mobility need to develop relationships with others to a level where these individuals have their best interests at heart. Some research participants indicated that they had learnt from observing others and their own experience that it was important to be selective when choosing members

of key networks as some relationships could become exploitative. Some people in the workplace engaged in relationships for personal gain and their behaviour toward others was calculating and deceitful (Townsend &Troung, 2017):

> People take your ideas. Someone can say to you, this is an issue. Work this issue out. I would do 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and they'll go and propose that and then sort of make it sound as if it's their idea. You will land up being the person that becomes the go-to person. And then they kind of do not promote you, they would not be able to replace you or close your gaps that way. So sometimes being the star child. It feels like punishment because you can never move. You always try to fix things or put out fires or people are taking your ideas and presenting them as their own, and progressing (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

> Don't be too good at your job. Because you will do it forever. Your relationships are way more important than your output. I have seen it in the workplace. I have seen it. I am in a specialist role. I worked with a lady who was so brilliant in analysis. I knew when I needed help this is the person I go to. This is the go-to person. She had the patience to teach whatever. And that is how I would complete some of my tasks. But my relationships were stronger. So I was more noticed than her. She was a quiet person, a quiet specialist. You don't want to be in a position where a company says she can't be promoted. Who else is going to do this work, you know? (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> What I have noticed is how they (***gatekeepers)*** limit your access to decision-makers. How they misrepresent decision makers to you. How they would misrepresent your work or present your work as if it is theirs. Not give credit where credit is due. That is the stuff I have noticed and experienced (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools, executive).

> Just being able to reflect time and time again, who am I and what are my values? I won't tolerate it if someone disrespects me. At times, the first impression that I make is that I am soft and I can be exploited. That is reminding myself that this is how I appear but if someone wants to take advantage, I have to assert myself. I have to remind myself that, this is who I am and then assert myself. And make sure that I am not being taken advantage of. That is the other thing that has helped me throughout the years (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

8.3.4.2.Continuous development

Research participants in the current study indicated that people who wanted to experience upward mobility needed to engage in continuous development. This development included both formal and informal learning:

> So I left South Africa and went overseas to study. I told them, you must know I am not here for your university. There are better universities in South Africa. I left there because I want to know how you live. They thought what you are talking about. I knew exactly what I was talking about. I associated with everybody who was in a management position. I will go to a different department just to talk to someone who was a black person or a foreigner in the country leading a department. I wanted to know their struggles and strategies on how I can do that. I will offer my services to file their work. I will offer my services to sit with them whilst they do their work. I will stay with them every minute that I was given. I was not anticipating that I will come back and run a department. I just wanted to know what difference between them and how we did things in South Africa. I knew I went there to study but I didn't only study. I went to their communities. I went to their churches. I volunteered in those agencies so that I could have a wealth of knowledge and thinking that when I come to South Africa, I will make it a better place. I know I can't change the world but I can change the people around me. A black person, from Africa, a woman my age, I studied whilst I was old. So that they can see the seriousness of wanting to learn (Mokgadi, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> Don't stop learning. Even if you have your qualification or degree, don't stop learning. Even if it's online. It doesn't have to be another degree but gaining knowledge. It seems very low level. My boss always told me this; make sure your admin is in order. That is advice for career progression because constantly you do the same thing in the workplace. If your files are in order and when you have the things needed or you are seen to have the right answers, you are more organized. And when you are organized, you allow people to gain more trust in you. And favour you when opportunities come (Reitumetse, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> I am very creative when it comes to my work and what needs to happen. People don't believe you have to be creative in my role. I stay curious all the time. Just because a law

> says X, Y and Z it is a matter of calling our consultants. Being how does this apply in terms of case history (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).
>
> Continuous development. Not formal education per se. Continuing to understand where my field is going. And positioning myself for it. It's more continuous development. Gaining new knowledge and etc. (Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive).

Acquiring educational qualifications or engaging in continuous development did not always lead to career progression in work environments where most people were highly qualified. Educational qualifications only increased the probabilities of accessing some work environments but not of advancement. Townsend and Troung (2017) point out that requirements that enable individuals to access workplaces are sometimes not the same as those that allow people to advance once they are in an organization. In environments where gatekeepers valued other criteria besides educational qualifications, engaging in continuous development did not facilitate career progression:

> I have strived to maintain a high work ethic and educate myself more in order to remain relevant in the field and to grow in my career. It's not always a guarantee of upward mobility as underqualified people sometimes get promoted because they are cadres or are relatives/friends/acquaintances of people in senior management (Lethiwe, middle-class, multiple schools, manager).
>
> SD:In my current organization, it is knowledge intensive. For instance, there are three different floors. I was walking around and kept greeting people and asking them what their qualifications were and there was no one, this is government and young people, there was no one with less than ***(interrupts self),*** most of them than younger than 35, none of them had a qualification less than a Masters degree. In my current work, the person who is likely to get ahead is someone who mastered both the technical side of their work and manages the politics of the workplace. They can sell ideas. Explain things in the simplest forms to people. So, those are the ones who are likely to get ahead. Because it is not based on qualifications. Almost, everyone is highly qualified. People who get ahead are those who go beyond their qualifications. Relate well with people. For instance, I was conducting an interview in the same workplace. The people who looked

like they would get the job based on their qualifications, didn't. Simply because they don't know how to relate to people. Because they simply didn't know how to relate to people.
LM: What were they doing?
SD: On a daily, they are well qualified. Technically superior. They have PhDs. But the people under them don't grow. They've got bad interpersonal skills. I suppose in my work environment what makes the big difference is personality. You don't make it through the system if you are technically weak.
(Sipho, working-class, black African schools, executive)

8.3.4.3.Hard work

According to Townsend and Troung (2017), individuals who are raised in working-class contexts advance to middle-class occupations through their perseverance and ability to perform even under circumstances that are not ideal. Some of the research participants in this study indicated that working hard was a requisite for upward career mobility:

> Hard work is my second nature. Everybody that I have worked with, starting from my first career would know that I would always go the extra mile. I could do my work and work that is not normally allocated to me. Even when I was doing my work, I was not doing it for the sake of just finishing my work but because I would want to show a better product. And I would always go the extra mile (Relebogile, working-class, black African schools, executive).

> The one thing that I always did in the positions that I had was, just to work according to what I said I would. Bring my work ethic into the workplace. When I commit to an organization, I am not going to limit my contribution to how they are treating me or my negative experiences. I will try to work harder towards what I am trying to be doing. To undermine all the negatives that are happening around me. That has helped me. I see it when I leave the organization. The companies that I have resigned from. There is still a positive relationship and they value what I have done. And they just struggled to acknowledge it. Which to me says whatever I am contributing. I am doing the right things (Phetogo, middle-class, black African schools, specialist).

Dlamini (2013) argued that working hard was an ineffective strategy when paired with humility. Thus, those who deploy this strategy have to also highlight their achievements to others (Dlamini, 2013). Furthermore, participants in different studies argued that the world of work is not based on a meritocracy and those who worked hard were not necessarily guaranteed that they would get rewarded (Carrim, 2012; Dlamini, 2013, Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017). A number of research participants in this study concurred with these viewpoints. Research participants in this study further indicated that working hard was an ineffective strategy if it led to gatekeepers feeling threatened or if the hard work was exerted in an area that was not highly valued by an organization :

> People have to know who you are. People have to know the work you have done. You need to have a sponsor who will mention your name in conversations with senior people. Without that kind of sponsor, you are not going to go anywhere. Work alone is not going to speak for you, it is not enough. Your work ethic on its own is not enough. You need to have a sponsor who will help you navigate the culture and the organization. And mentions you and your work at the right tables. So that is the one thing I am learning to do better at my current company than what I did at my previous company (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools, executive).

> I think sometimes in the current context, not necessarily looking at one's interest or passion and allowing them to grow in that. For example, someone who is not passionate about academia. They are being forced to publish or they won't get promoted. That would be the issue instead of considering that this person works very hard and sees more patients. They are willing to train interns but they will not promote such a person who is responsible. Sometimes the people who get promoted are those who are concerned about their own things and their own development and not necessarily benefitting the system. The person instead of attending to patients for instance or assisting the interns, the person locks himself or herself in the office writing and writing. The fact that they are publishing will get them promoted instead of the person who is working hard in terms of what they are supposed to be doing. These people only do what is visible to others and not the core work they are supposed to be doing. Sometimes it becomes unfair in that way (Katlego, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> You can work as hard as you want, but if you are a threat. If your work ethic and your work become such that it threatens the person that you report to. It might not necessarily be a good thing. In most cases, in a normal and sane environment it is a good thing to have, you know, the smartest person in your group. But if the smartest person is smarter than you as a manager, that's not a good thing in today's world. Maybe 20 years ago (Banthatile, middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist).

8.3.4.4.Choose battles wisely

A number of research participants pointed out that all battles were not worth fighting in the workplace. Some battles required an excessive amount of energy as they could not be easily won. Those who engaged in these battles risked depleting their resources unnecessarily or engaging in worthless fights. Some research participants further indicated that they walked away when it became clear that the fight could not be easily won, they downscaled what they wanted to achieve to preserve resources or they deflected their attention to other areas until they had the stamina to fully commit themselves to the fight:

> The culture is not dynamic and it's set. As a new person coming in, you can find it frustrating. I found it frustrating. I was depressed for the first three months. What am I doing and what is my purpose? I feel like I am coming to work to press a button. The culture is very rigid and there is very little room for new ideas and improvement. Although there are pockets of people who are receptive to new ideas and new ways of doing things. You have to be strategic and choose your battles. To be able to effect some sort of change that you want. You are going to burn out trying to put everything into place. You are going to burn out.
> (Lethabo, middle-class, multiple schools, senior specialist).

> You just need to stay focused on your journey. My thing is you need to stay focused on your journey. You need to focus on what you wrote down as your to-dos when you walked into that space. Be realistic about what you can change and leave when you realize that those qualities of being focused and industrious are no longer there. When you realize that now we are not being honest with each other. When you say you want transformation and you replace people who leave with white people then you are not being honest. That is now off the table. When you were busy writing down things and

saying this is the person that you are. You can't keep insulting my intelligence by saying that these were the only people available. Every black person who has worked and has a linked in profile knows that there are other people who can do justice to the position…It gets lonely but when you seek peace you know it is time. When you start seeing the friction, you say it is time for me to leave. Another person will walk in and they will do a little more than I did…. when I realize that this is no longer my table I move. I fight but I can only fight so much. When it is time to move, I move (Tinyiko, working-class, black African schools, executive).

I am not trying to push any boundaries. Not trying to enter spaces where I am unwanted ***(senior management and executive level).*** I am comfortable where I am. If I have to move, it has to be a linear move. It would have to benefit me. I am much more open to fighting gatekeeping if I feel that this is something that I do want. And I don't have that overwhelming want of anything right now. I think it is the best stage for me to accumulate the education that I want. I am not trying to fight. My focal point is on positioning myself. I have diversified my education. I may not have a very high level in terms of NQF. But I have done a lot of things at that level. So that my portfolio is much more diverse and going forward, I can choose which area I want to specialise in. I have studied various courses aligned with my profession and I can decide which ones I want to do. Because I have studied all of them, I am better placed to choose one of them. People who are specialists can only concentrate on the area of their speciality. I can diversify. That has been my focal point at this moment to diversify my portfolio so that I can be better adaptable to different areas in my field (Noxolo, working-class, multiple schools, manager).

LM: How did you unlearn the behaviour ***(not standing up for oneself)***?
VN: At first, I went to the other extreme. I fought everything and that didn't help. So I had to learn that balance. I had to learn that you cannot fight every battle. I had to learn emotional maturity. I had to learn emotional intelligence. I had to learn to speak out without offending. To be firm and clear about where I stand about something. I had to relearn. I had to understand that my own feelings matter. No matter how senior a person is, I could find a way to disagree respectfully. Just because they are older or senior does not mean that they are right (Vuyokazi, middle-class, black African schools, executive).

8.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the results related to the second research question (RQ2): What are the differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations that were acquired in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations? The chapter also discussed results related to the third research question (RQ3): What strategies have black Africans in middle-class occupations deployed to facilitate their upward career mobility or to maintain their position in the workplace? The chapter focused on the hierarchies that were prevalent in different work context, how these hierarchies were maintained and strategies that research participants used to navigate these hierarchies.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

9.1. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. In 1994, South Africa transitioned from a political system that promoted unconcealed racial discrimination to a democratic state (World Bank, 2018). Overt racial barriers were eliminated and black Africans had an increased opportunity to experience upward career mobility (Makgetla, 2020). The persistent problem is that only a minority of black Africans have accessed higher positions in post-apartheid South Africa (World Bank, 2018). Scholars argue that the social mobility trajectories of black Africans are not well understood as the social class of origin of black Africans tends to be homogenized in most discussions (Chipkin, 2012; Mabandla, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). Post-apartheid narratives on the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations ignore that there were black Africans who occupied middle-class occupations during the apartheid era and that not all black Africans were members of the working class during this period (Khunou, 2015; Mabandla, 2015). This study aimed to address this gap by exploring the social mobility experiences of black Africans raised middle class versus those raised working class.

9.2. NORMATIVE CULTURE-SPECIFIC SELVES

The first research question in this study was, what are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school? This study found that there were no discernible differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans raised middle-class versus black Africans raised working-class. Most of the research participants in this study were raised in areas that were historically allocated to black Africans, urban townships and homelands, and these areas accommodated individuals from different social classes (Crankshaw, 2002, Foster & Wale, 2017). The results of research participants raised in historically black African environments support the argument made by Lentz (2016) that it is sometimes challenging to apply social class theories in Africa that assume that people from different social classes have different dispositions because they live lives that do not intersect. The only glaring difference between the research participants was that individuals who were in a subordinate position in a field because of their capital endowment or dispositions had to be strong, tough and resilient to meet the requirements in a social environment (Krauss et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2012; Stephens et al., 2010; Stephen et al., 2014).

9.2.1. Expressiveness

The Bourdesian Approach argues that social hierarchies are maintained in an environment through dominant groups imposing their way of being and knowing as natural and superior (Schubert, 2014). Studies indicate that those at the top half of the social class hierarchy promote their way of knowing as superior to that of people at the bottom half of the social

class hierarchy (Townsend & Troung, 2017). Individuals who occupy top positions in organizations are seen as more competent than those at the bottom of organizational hierarchies (Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). Males are also allowed in some cultures to silence the voices of females (Carrim, 2019; Mabasa, 2021). Furthermore, Chong (2009) states that members of dominant groups are normatively allowed to engage in offensive behaviour when interacting with members of subordinate groups whereas members of subordinate groups are expected to display exemplary behaviour.

The results obtained in this study for some of the participants raised middle class were not aligned with arguments that individuals who are raised middle class are encouraged to express their needs and preferences (Krauss et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2012; Stephens et al., 2010; Stephen et al., 2014). Societal hierarchies and requirements in different gateway contexts contributed to these research participants indicating that they were shaped not to be expressive. Historically, black Africans occupied a subordinate position on the racial hierarchy applied in the country (World Bank, 2018). According to Carrim (2012, 2019), the apartheid government silenced the voices of black people in South Africa and those who spoke out risked being arrested, killed or detained without trial. Brannon et al. (2017) further indicate that experiences of racial oppression, prejudice and discrimination can sometimes limit the ability of racial minorities to be expressive. This sentiment was also shared by a research participant who grew up in a multiracial home and observed differences in the demeanour of her white godmother and black African mother.

Furthermore, research participants who were raised in the homeland context indicated that their ability to be expressive was limited as they were under the constant surveillance of adults in this environment. Moreover, Stephens et al. (2014) state that in dangerous and

unpredictable environments, such as urban townships and inner city neighbourhoods, there are fewer safety nets and the consequences of making mistakes are dire. Thus, parents in these environments give explicit instructions and children are not encouraged to question or debate with their parents (Stephens et al., 2014). The obedience-driven prescripts of black African cultures also contributed to some research participants not being socialized to voice their opinions by their parents or guardians. Most research participants in the current study indicated that good children in their homes were those who obeyed instructions given by adults without questioning. Black African schools further continued this socialization by encouraging students to be obedient. Those who did not adhere to set rules were corporally punished, humiliated or told that they would not succeed in life because they were not obedient. Furthermore, research participants who attended multiracial schools also indicated that they were not allowed to express their black African cultures in this system as the schools subscribed to the cultural narrative that standards would drop if they allowed this (Urson & Kessi, 2018).

Most participants in the current study, irrespective of their social class background, stated that they had to learn to challenge authority figures with respect and to express their opinions to facilitate their upward career mobility in the workplace. This was the most common adjustment that research participants indicated that they had to make in the workplace. Other participants mentioned that organizations imposed limits on what employees could share their opinions about. One participant stated that gatekeepers did not want to be made uncomfortable and relationships tended to turn sour if they felt challenged. Thus, a balance had to be struck in the workplace between being too expressive and not being expressive enough.

9.2.2. Independence or Interdependence

Individuals who are raised in working-class contexts are hypothesized to be more other-focused whilst those who are raised in middle-class contexts are expected to be more self-focused (Krauss et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2012; Stephens et al., 2010). The results of research participants raised working class in the homeland context and participants raised middle class in the suburbs were consistent with previous studies (Krauss et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2012; Stephens et al., 2010). The results of research participants who were raised middle-class in the homeland context ran counter to arguments that individuals who are raised middle-class are self-focused. The results of research participants who were raised working-class in urban townships or inner city areas were also at odds with arguments that working-class contexts shape social responsiveness and similarity (Krauss et al., 2010; Piff et al., 2012; Stephens et al., 2010).

Miyamoto (2017) indicates that the cultural psychological approach contextualises social class in a cultural meaning system that members of a community use to define what makes a person good and competent. According to Marumo (2017), black African cultures promote interdependence with individuals being shaped by prescripts of Ubuntu/Botho (I am because we are). Research participants in the current study who were raised in the homeland context indicated that this social environment promoted interdependence. Most residents in the homeland context were ethnically similar and the prescripts of Christianity and black African cultures guided their behaviour. Research participants who were raised middle-class in the homeland context in the current study ascribed to the cultural meaning system of interdependence used in their communities rather than the psychological orientation expected from members of their social class (Miyamoto, 2017).

Manstead (2018) argues that sociocultural contexts that are dangerous and unpredictable shape individuals to be attuned to threats in the social environment. Research participants who were raised in urban townships or inner city areas indicated that these social environments required them to be vigilant. Threats in these social contexts emanated from other human beings. Piff et al. (2010) suggest that certain levels and types of threat lower prosociality. Urban townships and inner-city neighbourhoods also had ethnically diverse residents and most participants in the current study mentioned that ties were weak between these residents. These results do not fit neatly into arguments that individuals in working-class contexts deal with psychological threats by forming relationships with others and individuals in middle-class contexts use their resources to buffer threat. Some participants who were raised working class in urban townships or inner city areas had parents or guardians who had limited resources and who could not buffer psychological stress through their economic capital and they also lived in communities that were not interdependent.

However, some of these participants mentioned the pivotal role that the church or assistance from their parents' employers played in their upward mobility. The tentative conclusion that could be made is that the social capital of people in homeland contexts included those who lived nearby and kin whereas individuals in urban townships created their communities. Furthermore, the results of research participants raised working-class in the current study who grew up in urban townships and inner city neighbourhoods ran counter to arguments that people from working-class contexts are raised to be similar and connected (Dietze & Knowles, 2016, Kraus et al., 2011, Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). Research participants in the current study indicated that they were encouraged by their families to be distinct from members of their communities. These results, however, are consistent with the findings of previous studies on black Africans who lived in urban townships (Iqani, 2015;

Khunou et al., 2019; Krige, 2012, Wale, 2013). Studies show that black Africans in urban areas historically attempted to be distinct from each other through acts of consumption (Iqani, 2015; Khunou et al., 2019; Krige, 2012, Wale, 2013). Consumption was used in urban townships to signal class boundaries, challenge racial hierarchies and as a statement of aspiration or identity (Iqani, 2015; Khunou et al., 2019). Status markers in this context included home ownership, leisure activities, clothing, alcohol and car ownership (Iqani, 2015; Khunou et al., 2019; Krige, 2012).

According to Brannon et al. (2017), one of the responses that black people have developed to deal with racial discrimination is to have an interdependent schema associated with race. Neckerman et al. (1999) note that some African-Americans in middle-class occupations strive to be excellent because they want to dispel racial stereotypes. Other African-Americans used their social capital to open doors for members of their racial group (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Neckerman et al., 1999). Van der Putten (2001) also mentions that some African-American academics from working-class backgrounds enhanced the cultural capital of African-American students from a similar background by sharing their social mobility experiences with them. Marx (2019) further found that experienced black Africans in her study used their knowledge of the workplace to assist less experienced black Africans who were just entering the accountancy field. Research participants in the current study who were socialized to regard other black Africans as part of their social group indicated that they had to adapt to the fact that not all black Africans in the workplace perceived that they had to protect weaker members of their racial group who lacked the requisite capital. Furthermore, research participants who studied in Catholic schools mentioned that these schools promoted individualism and relationships with others were formed based on competence. Research participants who were exposed to members of other racial groups from a young age also

indicated that they learnt to form relationships with others through appreciating cultural diversity rather than looking for cultural homogeneity.

All the participants in this study stated that they were raised in social environments where they were told that they could influence and control their futures. The cultural narrative of education being the key to success was used by parents or guardians of research participants in the current study to support the assertion that they could influence their futures (Bray et al., 2010; Seekings, 2017, Telzak, 2014). The results of research participants who were raised working-class were inconsistent with theories that argue that individuals who grow up in working-class contexts perceive that they have limited influence, control and choices (Manstead, 2018; Stephens et al., 2014). The sample in this study, however, was biased as research participants raised working class were already employed in middle-class occupations. Telzak (2012) explored the social mobility beliefs of working-class and middle-class black Africans and found that some working-class participants in his study perceived that structural barriers hindered them from experiencing upward mobility. Some of these participants even went further to argue that their children also had low probabilities of experiencing upward mobility (Telzak, 2012; 2014).

9.3. WORK CONTEXT

The second research question in this study was what are the differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations who are employed in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations? The study found that research participants who worked in organizations dominated by other black Africans perceived these environments to be gendered whereas participants who worked in

white-dominated environments experienced these environments as racialised. The current study also found that research participants who were part of the dominant group, in both work contexts, experienced their workplaces differently when compared to research participants who were part of subordinate groups. Female research participants who worked in black-African dominated contexts perceived these work environments to have structural barriers that limited career progression whereas male participants indicated that these environments offered opportunities for career growth. Research participants in the current study who had worked in multinational companies or had international exposure were also less likely to describe organizations dominated by white people as racialised.

In organizations dominated by black Africans, research participants in the current study perceived that black African males and those who were politically affiliated had better opportunities of experiencing upward career mobility. In organizations dominated by whites, research participants in this study perceived that white people had better opportunities to experience upward career mobility in this context. These perceptions are supported by Employment Equity Reports published by the Commission for Employment Equity (2020). Affirmative Action candidates in both environments were seen as undeserving of occupying senior positions (Piff et al., 2018). Female participants in the current study who worked in organizations dominated by black Africans indicated that Affirmative Action candidates in their work spaces were female. These participants stated that the Affirmative Action label was used to question whether females had the competencies to lead and this label also gave people in junior positions permission to undermine women in leadership positions. In racialised structures, Affirmative Action candidates were black Africans. Research participants in the current study mentioned that in this environment they constantly dealt with situations where their competence was questioned. These participants also observed

gatekeepers limiting the career progression of black Africans by deploying the cultural narrative that black Africans were not experienced enough to occupy senior positions. This finding was similar to that of other studies that argued that the notion of racialised competence was masked as skills deficit (Biyela, 2007; Magojo, 1996; Ndzwayiba, 2017).

Workplaces with racialised organizational cultures reflect historically and socially created racial structures that have been socially reproduced over time in South Africa (Human & Human, 1989; Nzimande, 1991; Watts, 1985; Wella, 1983). Workplaces with gendered organizational cultures also reflect historically and socially created hierarchies reproduced in black African communities. During the apartheid era, black African women were regarded as minors who had no legal capacity and they were under the authority of black African males (Simons, 1986). Research participants in the current study indicated that members of dominant groups legitimised their positions by highlighting their superiority over members of subordinate groups (Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). A female research participant indicated that structures in her environment were legitimatised via arguments that women were not suited to agriculture even though they made up a majority in professional positions. Studies also indicate that black Africans in white-dominated contexts are stereotyped as more suitable to occupy positions that are easy and practical or support roles (Magojo, 1996; Modisha, 2008; Reuben & Bobat, 2014; Weeto, 2019).

Hierarchies in both work contexts were also maintained at an interactional level. The answers provided on how hierarchies were maintained in both organizations dominated by black Africans and whites aligned to bullying behaviour mentioned by Motsei (2015, p. 221). Some of the behaviours mentioned by research participants in this study included:

Bullying Behaviour	Organizations dominated by black Africans	Organizations dominated by white people
Questioning the competence of individuals		✓
Discrediting and ignoring someone's contribution		✓
Humiliation-belittling, undermining, demeaning	✓	
Excluding a person from work-related functions	✓	
Continuous criticism of someone behind their back	✓	
Abuse of power	✓ Sexual harassment	✓ HR Practices
Refusal of access to training or promotional opportunities	✓	✓
Taking credit for the work performed by another	✓	✓

Table 8: Bullying behaviour (Motsei, 2015, p. 221).

Hierarchy-maintaining behaviours that were commonly used in organizations that were dominated by black Africans took place mostly in the relationship space. Mabasa (2021) explored bullying behaviour between black African supervisors and black African subordinates and the bullying tactics mentioned by research participants in that study are similar to those mentioned by participants in the current study. Mabasa (2021) further found that young adults and women were usually targets of bullying as young adults in African communities were expected to be subservient to elders and women were expected to be subservient to men. Hierarchy-maintaining behaviours that took place in organizations dominated by white people mostly took place in the task space. One of the possible reasons for this could be that discrimination in the South African workplace is deemed to be fair if it is based on job requirements (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019). Thus, gatekeepers

in this work context misuse HR practices to keep up the appearance that their decisions are based on merit and not racial discrimination.

9.4.ADOPTED STRATEGIES

The last research question explored in this study was, what strategies have black Africans in middle-class occupations deployed to facilitate their upward career mobility or to maintain their position in the workplace? The results obtained in this study are aligned with the Bourdesian approach that states that individuals who do not meet the capital requirements in a field or who are not equipped with the dispositions required in a social environment can choose to exit a field, challenge hierarchies in that field or acquire the dispositions or capital required in that context (Barrett, 2015; Maton, 2008; Wacquant, 2006). The career mobility strategies mentioned by research participants in this study such as hard work, building relationships with gatekeepers and keeping abreast with developments in one's professional field were also similar to what had been mentioned in previous studies (Crul et al. 2017a; Crul et al., 2017b; Konyali, 2018; Rezai, 2017; Yagbasan, 2019).

Maton (2008) states that people select strategies based on the positions that they occupy in the field, the choices that they deem are available to them based on past experiences and their vision of the future that is shaped by their past. In this study, some research participants saw the work context as a system where racial or gender hierarchies created an uneven playing ground with members of subordinate groups having more barriers to overcome. There is some validity to this view as women and black Africans have progressed slower in post-apartheid workplaces when compared to other groups (Commission for Employment Equity, 2020). Other participants viewed organizations in the South African labour market as

platforms that they could move across to gain valuable experience (Karakus, 2021). Research participants in the current study who had international exposure also perceived that their employment opportunities were not only limited to South Africa. Thus, research participants in the current study had different perceptions of structural barriers and opportunities in the work context based on their previous exposure (Martin & Côté, 2019).

Research participants in the current study also devised strategies based on how they experienced their workplaces. Some participants indicated that they were navigating work contexts where they felt under threat psychologically (Piff et al., 2012). For example, some were perceived as being too ambitious or outspoken and this triggered acrimonious relationships with gatekeepers in some contexts . These participants indicated that navigating unsafe contexts required setting clear boundaries, putting on a layer of protection, focusing on meeting job requirements and being shrewd when interacting with gatekeepers. Research participants in the current study who felt psychologically safe indicated that their superiors supported their career progression whilst other participants indicated that they had built their competencies to a level where they felt psychologically safe even in hostile environments.

Furthermore, research participants in the current study adopted different career mobility strategies based on their perceptions regarding the role that gatekeepers played in facilitating their upward career mobility. Research participants who placed their career mobility opportunities in an organizational context provided personal narratives that aligned with research that indicates that gatekeepers play a pivotal role in advancing the careers of others (Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Piff et al., 2018; Travis & Thorpe-Moscon, 2018; Townsend & Troung, 2017). For these participants, the strategy that they adopted was to signal cultural and interpersonal fit to gatekeepers (Connelly et al., 2011; Karasek & Bryant, 2012).

Research participants who indicated that they experienced their workplace as insiders who occupied senior positions but also as outsiders because of their social identities mentioned that they were cordial and vigilant when interacting with gatekeepers (Bell & Nkomo, 2001). The strategies that most of these participants adopted were to build networks outside their organizations and moving on when it became clear that they would not experience career progression. Most research participants who indicated that they kept their distance from gatekeepers mentioned that they used their work performance as a platform to advance their careers. Some research participants in the current study who occupied senior positions stated that they engaged in efforts to change the hierarchies in their organizations.

Lamaison and Bourdieu (1986) further state that navigating a context successfully involves getting a feel for the game, moving forward through trial and error and constantly improvising as situations change. In the current study, some research participants mentioned that strategies had to be deployed in a manner that met the requirements in the field for them to facilitate upward career mobility. For example, working hard and acquiring additional qualifications was an ineffective strategy in an environment where individuals were selected for top positions because of their political affiliations. The moral or relational outlook of participants also influenced how they perceived different career mobility strategies. For example, a participant in this study described individuals who had access to information from different groups as busybodies. Another participant neutrally described these individuals as having their ear on the ground whereas another participant exalted the benefit of having information from different groups as she stated that she always had her pulse on what was about to happen in her workplace or industry.

9.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the findings of the three research questions explored in this study. The current study found that there were no differences between the normative culture-specific selves and behavioural patterns of research participants raised working-class versus middle-class. The study also found that workplaces dominated by black Africans had gendered hierarchies and workplaces dominated by white people had racialised hierarchies. Furthermore, the study found that the strategies adopted by research participants in the current study to advance or maintained their positions in the workplace were similar to those of participants in other studies. These strategies included building social capital and acquiring the cultural capital promoted in a context.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. INTRODUCTION

Most research on socio-psychological aspects of social class was conducted in the United States where social class structures are relatively static (Phillips et al., 2020a, Phillips et al., 2020b). Scholars argue that social class, unlike race or gender, is not stable and literature in this area should reflect this dynamism (Martin & Côté, 2019, Phillips et al., 2020a, Phillips et al., 2020b). This study explored the social mobility experiences of black Africans in a South African context where political changes had increased the social mobility opportunities of this group (World Bank, 2018). The study used the Bourdieusian Approach as its theoretical framework (Edgerton & Roberts, 2014). Data was collected through life history interviews and twenty (20) research participants were interviewed. The data collected was analysed through narrative analysis. This chapter will discuss the limitations of the study, the implication of the research both at a practical and theoretical level, contributions of the study and autobiographical reflections.

10.2. LIMITATIONS

The definition of social class is a contested topic and socio-psychological scholars circumvent these debates by focusing on income, occupations or educational qualifications (Manstead, 2018). Research participants in this study were categorized as raised working-class or middle-class based on the occupations of their parents or guardians. This

categorization presented problems in the homeland setting where some parents or guardians held other forms of wealth such as cattle and in this geographical context some families could also sustain themselves by growing their food. The standard of living in this social environment was also lower than in urban areas. Thus, there was a participant in this study who had parents who were not highly educated but who could provide a lifestyle that was characterized by material abundance. Resnick (2015) states that scholars in Africa face challenges when trying to differentiate members of the middle class from the working class. There is no unanimous agreement on which occupations are middle-class. Most people in Africa are poor and those employed in working-class occupations have a comparatively better standard of living when compared to unemployed people who make up a majority in this context (Resnick, 2015).

The method of data collection used in the current study was chosen because of practical reasons. The university had given me six (6) months after my ethics approval to collect data, analyse it and write up the results of the study. The plan was to initially use online meeting platforms to conduct interviews with research participants. The two pilot interviews were conducted using different online meeting platforms but there were challenges with internet connectivity. To improve the quality of the call, the cameras had to be switched off in both interviews. After the pilot interviews, I decided to conduct telephonic interviews as there would be minimum connectivity issues. This meant that I had limited control over the interview setting. A few participants put me on hold to answer other calls or people walked into the room during some interviews. I also could not see the body language of the research participants and they also could not see my body language (Curtis & Curtis, 2017; Greener, 2013; Lanford et al., 2018).

Time limits also meant that I did not have an opportunity to go back and discuss the results of the study with the research participants. This process would have allowed me to maybe gain new insights or other explanations of the results obtained in the current study (Tracy, 2010). However, bias in the interpretation made on the results was minimized through the viewpoints shared by research participants being contextualised using previous studies (Esin, 2011). The interpretations made were also supported by multiple quotes from research participants so to avoid the results of this study being based on anecdotal evidence (Fraser, 2004). The perceptions of key participants, however, could have enhanced the quality of the study as some of the participants perceived the world very differently from me because of their exposure to different contexts.

10.3. CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH

This study contributes to research that argues that lived experiences of black Africans have to be studied in their historical, sociological and economic contexts (Mabandla, 2015; Maseko, 2000; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). Post-apartheid studies that contextualise the social mobility experiences of black Africans were mostly demonstrating that the black African middle class existed before 1994 (Mabandla, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). Hence, samples in these studies were limited to participants who were raised middle-class during the apartheid era (Mabandla, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). The current study extended this work by also including black Africans who were raised working class and who now occupy middle-class occupations. The samples from previous studies were also small (Khunou, 2015; Krige, 2015). Khunou (2015) interviewed two black African females and Krige (2015) interviewed one African male. Mabandla (2015) interviewed a larger sample but only focused

on research participants who originated from Mthatha. In this study, data was collected from twenty (20) black Africans who were raised in different parts of South Africa.

The study also contributes to the literature that argues that racial and social class experiences cannot be understood separately without taking into account their intersection (Carter-Black & Kayama, 2011; Mabandla, 2015; Khunou, 2015; Kiguwa, 2014; Steele, 1988; Van der Putten; 2001; Van Zyl-Hermann, 2014). The current study demonstrated that black Africans who occupy middle-class occupations are a heterogeneous group and their experiences are not homogeneous. The research participants in this study entered the workplace having been exposed to different geographical contexts, homes with different material conditions and diverse school systems. Furthermore, the research participants in this study did not experience the workplaces in the same way as their capital endowment and dispositions placed them in different positions. Thus, this study made a contribution by supplementing social class literature that is based on race essentialism.

The study further aimed to make a contribution by supplementing social class literature that is based on social class essentialism. Markus and Stephens (2017) state that socio-psychological literature indicates that people who belong to the top half of the social class hierarchy tend to have a psychological orientation that uses the self as a referent and those belonging to the bottom half of the social class hierarchy use the ingroup as their reference group. Markus and Stephens (2017) further state that these psychological tendencies deviate from expectations when social class interacts with factors such as race or cultural meaning systems dominant in a society. The current study adds to the growing literature that explores how cultural meaning systems in different societies influence normative culture-specific selves in those environments.

Furthermore, the study made a contribution by exploring the work experiences of black Africans who worked in organizations dominated by other black Africans. Most studies on the experiences of black Africans (Biyela, 2007; Canham &Williams, 2017; Carey, 2018; Dlamini. 2013; Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017; Ngoma 2016a, Weeto, 2019), African-Americans (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Durr & Wingfield, 2011; Holder et al., 2015; Travis & Thorpe-Moscon, 2018) and second-generation immigrants (Crul et al. 2017a; Crul et al. 2017b; Konyali, 2018; Rezai, 2017; Yagbasan, 2019) were conducted in environments where white people were members of the dominant group. In the process of conducting a literature review for the current study, the only study that I found that explored the experiences of black Africans who worked in organizations that were dominated by other black Africans was conducted by Mabasa (2021). This study adds to limited knowledge on the experiences of research participants who work in environments that are dominated by individuals who occupy subordinate positions on national ethnic or racial hierarchies.

On a practical level, this study offers suggestive evidence that HR practices are a link between the actions of managers and hierarchies in organizations dominated by white people. These types of organizations employ approximately seventy-three per cent (73%) of the total workforce in the country (Commission for Employment Equity, 2019). The collective actions of these managers aggregate to national income inequality that is race-based (Commission for Employment Equity, 2021; Gray & Kish-Gephart, 2013). The study highlights that HR practitioners as custodians of these practices need to be more vigilant when implementing organizational policies. These practitioners must assess if the criteria of exclusion used in their work environments is job-related or is a proxy for race (Hammond et al., 2007).

10.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Research participants in the current study indicated that hierarchies in their organizations were maintained through bullying behaviour (Motsei, 2015). Previous research also indicates that black Africans experienced racial micro-aggressions in the workplace (Biyela, 2007; Canham & Williams, 2017; Carey, 2018;Dlamini. 2013; Marx, 2019; Myres, 2013; Ndzwayiba, 2017). Motsei (2015) further found that bullying targets in her study explained bullying behaviour through a gender or race lenses but some bullies were females and members of racial groups that were subordinate in the workplace. Bergh (2018) also found that reports of abusive supervision were higher when managers were black African or Indian than when the managers were white. Future research can explore why South African managers choose to maintain hierarchies in the workplace through dysfunctional organizational behaviours. These studies can explore how exposure in the different gateway contexts of home, school and work shaped the managers' understanding of how a leader should behave and their perceptions regarding the normative behaviour that subordinates should display (Martin et al., 2017).

This study also explored the working experiences of black Africans in different occupations but the study did not delve into any profession. Bonnin and Ruggunan (2013, 2016) point out that different professions have unique gender, race and class structures that create wide-ranging barriers to entry, employment experiences and career mobility opportunities for members of different groups. Some occupations are also managed by professional bodies whereas gatekeepers in the workplace control access to other occupations (Bonnin & Ruggunan , 2013, Bonnin & Ruggunan, 2016). Mokgadi (working-class, black African schools, executive), a participant in this study, mentioned that black African academics could

bypass racialised hierarchies in the South African Higher Education sector by creating international networks. Banthatile (middle-class, multiracial schools, specialist), another participant in this study, discussed how the racial hierarchies in the customer service space were not easy to bypass as gatekeepers sorted employees according to race. Future studies could focus on how hierarchies in organizations and professions interact to form experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations.

Future research into hierarchies in the workplace can also focus on other contexts dominated by members of the same social identity groups. For example, professions where women are members of the dominant group or experiences of white males who work for other white males. Van der Putten (2001, p.15) argues that scholarship has to start moving to a place where we acknowledge that “Heterosexual does not mean homophobic . White does not mean racist. Male does not mean sexist. White male does not mean middle class”. Studying hierarchies in different environments can help us as scholars to understand how hierarchies are maintained in different contexts and to develop theories that move beyond using social identities as an explanation.

10.5. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION

After being retrenched in 2018, one of the decisions that I took was that going forward, I would no longer postpone doing things that I wanted to do. I had always wanted to complete a PhD. My PhD journey started in 2019 and the first year of the programme was seminar based. We had both local and international professors teaching us and this for me, was the most enjoyable part of the programme. We were introduced to scholars who were passionate about their areas of research and to interesting literature. We were also introduced to the idea

that people who are different in terms of personality, outlook, teaching styles etc. could be good scholars in their own different ways.

My interest in the study topic came from observations that I had made in the workplace. The last company that I worked for was a satellite branch of a big corporate. The corporate made a decision to move the satellite branch to the head office. This was a movement from a hierarchy that was based on professional designations to a racialised environment. Younger black Africans who went through the multiracial school system and had attained valued professional designations were visibly confused by this racialised system and struggled to adapt. People who were at the top of the hierarchy in the previous structure had attained an international qualification that a few people in South Africa possessed. These people were no longer admired in the new environment and most left. What was also interesting for me was how individuals who belonged to the dominant group became deflated by a system that overvalued their race and undervalued their credentials.

The new environment also had managers who travelled within the organization and across the different organizations in the industry with intact teams. These teams were multiracial and the insider-outsider status was not based on race. What these teams had in common was that they could not coexist with people whom they would find in the environment. The people who were already in the environment left voluntarily as they experienced incidents of constructive dismissal or were ejected from the organization through disciplinary or retrenchment processes. As black Africans, we would use appeals of racial loyalty to try and convince black Africans in these teams to stop victimizing another black African targeted by the team. This never worked and it took a long time to realize that the work environment was only

racialised for us but these individuals experienced a different environment because they were operating under the protection of their team and leader.

The work environment further exposed me to the fact that I could experience the workplace differently based on the people I was interacting with. I am a black African female, Industrial Psychologist, who is living with a disability. On a daily basis, I interacted with people who respected my professional expertise and those who did not trust me because they held stereotypes regarding the incompetence of black Africans or people living with disabilities. Thus, the Bourdieusian Approach made intuitive sense to me as I understood that organizational cultures shaped what was permissible in an environment and my interactions in the same environment could vary depending on who I was dealing with.

Meeting research participants in this study was also interesting as some participants challenged my socialized idea of a good person. The first time a research participant narrated a story where they were the hero, I was shocked. At some point, some of these participants who narrated hero stories would ask me, do you think I am bragging? I would say no but in my head, I would be thinking, I didn't know you could tell your story like that. I grew up in a rural township where self-promotion was perceived as being malicious. It was perceived as making oneself feel good by highlighting the weaknesses of others or emphasizing what they lacked. A good person in the context that I grew up in is someone who allows other people to save face by ensuring that they walk away from interactions feeling that their worth has not been diminished, irrespective of their position in society.

I also became aware of my embodied cultural capital in interactions with some research participants (Bourdieu, 1986). I went to black African schools and I was exposed to people of

other racial groups for the first time when I went to historically white universities. My pronunciation of English words is atrocious . A fact that I get reminded of daily by my youngest son who has taken to correcting how I speak. I am used to people from other racial groups not "understanding me". It was the first time, during this research process, meeting a black African who did not understand me. This person didn't understand every question that I asked her. After interviewing fifteen (15) participants who understood me, I found this participant's behaviour offensive. Another participant also spoke about the advantages of having attended multiracial schools and the cultural capital that these schools provided. In most of her stories, this participant spoke about how speaking English with an accent was sometimes an advantage in the workplace. This was an innocent conversation but it made me aware that we were from different worlds. Curiously, when listening to tapes of these interviews, I noticed that I started at some point stumbling over my words.

The PhD journey was interesting, challenging and humbling. What I now know for sure is that God has abounding mercy. That there are people who love me as I would not have been able to complete this without their assistance. I also know for sure that the world has kind people. There were people outside my circle, who had no social obligation toward me whatsoever, who extended help when they had no reason to do so. I was taught at home that I did not need to be the best but I needed to do my best. I bow out of this process knowing that I did my best. I gave this all that I had.

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APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS

GENDER:	OCCUPATION:
AGE:	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION:

THEMES	QUESTIONS	PURPOSE
Social Class Context	• Please tell me about where you grew up? • How would you describe the neighbourhood that you grew up in to someone who has never been to your neighbourhood. • If lived in more than one neighbourhood, what were the differences and similarities between the different neighbourhoods? • What do you think were the advantages of growing up in the neighbourhood/s that you grew up in? • What do you think were the disadvantages of growing up in the neighbourhood/s that you grew up in?	• Normative culture specific selves and behavioural patterns **Main question** What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school?
Home Context	• Who did you live with in your home when you were growing up? • What was the occupation/s of your care givers? • How did your family define a good child? Were you regarded as a good child by your family when you were growing up? • What lessons did you learn from your family that were helpful in the workplace? • What lessons did you learn from your family that were not helpful in navigating the world of work? • How does your socio-economic status compare to that of your parents or guardians? Please elaborate.	• Normative culture specific selves and behavioural patterns **Main question** What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school?
School Context	• Please describe for me the primary school/s that you attended? If more than one, what were the differences and similarities? • What types of students were regarded as good students in primary school? • How did the teachers treat bad students in comparison to good students? • Please describe the high school/s that you attended? How was it similar or different to primary school? • In general, what types of students were regarded as good students by teachers in the high school that you attended?	• Normative culture specific selves and behavioural patterns **Main question** What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in

	• How did the teachers treat bad versus good students. Were you a good or bad student in high school? • Were there expectations from the school system (primary or high school) that contradicted what you were taught at home?	gateway contexts of home and school?
Higher Education context	• What did you do immediately after school? • Please describe the tertiary institution/s that you attended? Was it a predominately black or white settings? What was the culture like? • What are some of the challenges that you can still remember encountering when you were completing your tertiary education? • What lessons did you learn from the school systems that were helpful in your work life? • What lessons did you learn from the school systems that were not helpful in your work life?	• Normative culture specific selves and behavioural patterns **Main question** What are the differences in the normative culture-specific selves of black Africans in middle-class occupations raised working-class versus black Africans raised middle-class that were acquired in gateway contexts of home and school?
Work context	• Please tell me about the culture of the organization that you work for and how do you experience working in this organization? • Looking at your career, was most of your working experience gained in black African or white dominated settings? • What were the main differences for you between working in organizations that were dominated by black Africans versus white people ? (if applicable)? • What types of people occupy dominant positions in your organization? Is this the same in your department or division? • Looking at your organization and other organizations that you have worked in, what strategies have you observed people using to advance their careers? • What strategies have you observed gate keepers use in your work environment to limit the career progression of others? • How would you describe your relationship with gatekeepers in your department, division or organization?	**Main question** What are the differences in the working experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations who are employed in predominately white organizations versus predominately black African organizations
Strategies	• Looking at how you managed your career, would you say you are someone who worked against a plan or did you let your career unfold. In a nutshell, did you plan to be where you are?	**Main question** What strategies have black Africans in middle-class

	• What strategies have you used since entering the world of work that have allowed you to be where you are today? • What strategies are most helpful when dealing with hostile gate keepers or working in hostile environments?	occupations deployed to facilitate upward career mobilityor to maintain their position in the workplace?
Interview context	• What were the power dynamics in the interview? • How did I feel about the interview? • Were there topics that were difficult to discuss? • What theories or personal viewpoints were supported in this interview? What was new or contradicted my viewpoints?	After the interview: Reflection

APPENDIX TWO: CONSENT LETTER PARTICIPANTS

Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Department of Human Resource Management

Research conducted by:
Ms. L. Mahlatji (19359889), Cell: 081 827 6038

Dear Respondent,

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Lerato Mahlatji, a doctoral student from the Department of Human Resources at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to explore the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations. Specifically, the study aims to understand what constitutes the social mobility of black Africans into middle-class occupations and how black Africans experience being in middle-class occupations.

Please note the following:

- This study involves conducting an in-depth interview that will last approximately one and a half hours. The interviews will be conducted by myself at a location and time that is convenient for you.
- To ensure your privacy, your name will not appear on any interview instruments and your answers will be treated as strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used when reporting results and any information that can lead to you being identified will be removed.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary and you will not be disadvantaged in any way for refusing to participate in the study. You have a right to withdraw from the study at any point without explanation or to refuse to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. You will not be disadvantaged in any way if you withdraw from the study.
- Interviews will be tape-recorded with your permission.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.

- The University of Pretoria requires that your research data and signed consent form be stored for a minimum of ten (10) years after the completion of this project in the University's Research Data Repository. The University of Pretoria will secure your data and your contact details will only be used if there are questions relating to the accuracy or authenticity of my study. This verification, if required, will be done in a manner that does not compromise your anonymity or the confidentiality of your participation.
- Please contact my supervisor, Professor NMH Carrim at 012 420 2466 or nasima.carrim@up.ac.za, if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign this form to indicate that:

You have read and understand the information provided above.

You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

_____________________________ ______________________

Respondent's signature **Date**

APPENDIX THREE: RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Approval Certificate

12 April 2022

Miss L Mahlatji
Department: Human Resource Management

Dear Miss L Mahlatji

The application for ethical clearance for the research project described below served before this committee on: 2022-03-11

Protocol No:	EMS043/22
Principal researcher:	Miss L Mahlatji
Research title:	A study exploring the social mobility experiences of black Africans in middle-class occupations
Student/Staff No:	19359889
Degree:	Doctoral
Supervisor/Promoter:	Prof N Mohamed Hoosen Carrim
Department:	Human Resource Management

The decision by the committee is reflected below:

Decision:	Approved
Conditions (if applicable):	Approve: Informed consent must be letterhead
Period of approval:	2022-05-02 - 2022-10-31

The approval is subject to the researcher abiding by the principles and parameters set out in the application and research proposal in the actual execution of the research. The approval does not imply that the researcher is relieved of any accountability in terms of the Codes of Research Ethics of the University of Pretoria if action is taken beyond the approved proposal. If during the course of the research it becomes apparent that the nature and/or extent of the research deviates significantly from the original proposal, a new application for ethics clearance must be submitted for review.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

pp PROF JA NEL
CHAIR: COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH ETHICS