

**"Between hope and hopelessness": A qualitative exploration of
'born free' constructions of transformation in post-apartheid higher
education**

By
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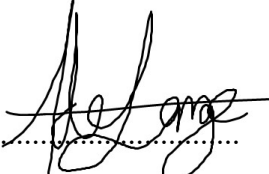
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31 August 2021

Declaration:

I, Anika De Lange (13097492), declare that *"Between hope and hopelessness": A qualitative exploration of 'born free' constructions of transformation in post-apartheid higher education* is my own original work except where I used or quoted another source, which has been acknowledged and referenced. This dissertation is submitted in fulfillment for the degree of Masters of Arts in Psychology at the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university.

Signed.....
(Anika De Lange)

On the 31 day of August 2021

Ethics Statement:

I, Anika De Lange (13097492), have obtained the applicable research ethics and approval for the research *"Between hope and hopelessness": A qualitative exploration of 'born free' constructions of transformation in post-apartheid higher education on 19 January 2021 (13097492(HUM014/1119) (Amendment))* from the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria

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Abstract:

Education is a process of facilitated learning whereby knowledge skills, morals, values, beliefs, and habits are acquired. Education provides the foundation from which people are taught to know, and respect, rights, laws, and regulations. The educational context provides a foundation from which people are able to form their social identities. The type of learning facilitated through formal education has a major impact on the social identity formation of students, and in turn the way they will interact with others in society. In this way education plays a major role in shaping the social structure of society (Moreku, 2014). Education is not a neutral process. Those in power who formulate education policies always have some form of political, social, or cultural goal in mind (Msila, 2007). The present day political motivation influencing education is the democratic goal of transformation: to redress, through social and educational reform, the inherited inequalities from the Apartheid era (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Badat (2010) highlights the immense social and political value of higher education in the promotion of health and well-being, the development of critical and democratically active citizens, as well as the assertion and pursuit of social justice and human rights. According to Brennan, et al. (2004) universities are regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development. During periods of more radical change, such as the overarching aim of transformation, universities play an important role in building new institutions of civil society, encouraging new cultural values, and developing the future social elite of a country (Brennan, et al., 2004).

Born frees are viewed as being uniquely positioned in the socio-historical context of South Africa, as they are the first generation of South African children born into a democratic system (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2018). They have grown up and received an education in a political and social structure attempting to adopt and live out transformation policies (Finchilescu, et al., 2007). It then comes to ask, what impact has transformation policy had on the social identities of the born free generation? This study attempts to answer this question through conducting a qualitative exploration of born free attitudes towards transformation. Focus group discussions and thematic analysis and were used to collect data on and describe the way in which born frees make meaning of transformation. The study found that born frees have integrated the idea of transformation into their social and collective identity, but they are very aware of the fact that transformation as it has been idealised has understandably not yet been achieved in the South African society yet. Additionally born frees describe that higher education has contributed towards their development as more critically aware and active members of society, but their education has fallen short in providing them with a means to

practically address the issues of transformation they are now able to identify. Born frees conclude that transformation is too complex an issue for them to be able to achieve in a single generation.

Keywords: Born free generation, higher education South Africa, transformation, policy gap, cultural change.

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Chapter 1: Contextualising the research study

1.1. Introduction

The following chapter will discuss the efforts and achievements of transformation within the sphere of higher education in post-apartheid South Africa. It includes an exploration of the prominent goals for transformation in education as set forth by the *1995 White Paper for Education and Training*. The goals and achievements of transformation in higher education as set forth in *Education White Paper 3, 1997* is also explored. The unique position of the born free generation within post-apartheid South Africa and the transformation agenda is also discussed. In spite of the transformative achievements since the fall of apartheid, born frees are not able to fully access and make use of these various transformative changes. Poverty, unaffordable university fees, and stifling institutional cultures oppose the transformative objectives of social redress and equal access at institutes of higher education (Hendricks, 2018). This is evidenced by the fees must fall protests which will also be briefly discussed. The discrepancies between the objectives of transformation policy, and the achieved outcomes of the policy points to a policy gap. Policy gaps are caused by a variety of interrelated factors. Within this chapter I specifically focus on the downfalls of a top-down approach to policy implementation and the need for cultural transformation. The role of cultural transformation as fundamental for achieving transformation objectives of equality, social redress, and equal access is explored. This includes a section on attitudes as the cognitive factors influencing cultural transformation and the role of leadership in guiding the cultural transformation process. The chapter concludes with a problem statement and motivation for the study. It will further include a discussion of the research questions and aims before providing a short overview of the additional chapters included in this study.

1.2. Transformation in Higher Education

In 1994 the Apartheid era came to an end, and a new democratically elected government was voted into power. Faced with the critical task of transforming South African society, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was drawn up in 1996 (Moreku, 2014). This new constitution set out the existence, rights, duties, and structure of the republic, citizens, and government in South Africa. It ushered in an era where the South African state, as well as all institutions, are to “respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights” embodied in the Bill of Rights (Badat, 2010, p. 3). Within the new

constitution The Bill of Rights was set out to redress the discrimination and inequalities of the past through the democratic values of equality, freedom, and human dignity. In this way, the new democratic government committed itself to the transformation of an inherited social and economic structure through the institutionalisation of a new social order (Badat, 2010).

The new Constitution of South Africa aims to heal the divisions of the past through establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights. The purpose of the new constitution is to free the potential of each citizen and improve their quality of life through laying the foundation for an open, democratic, and equal society based on the will of the people (Msila, 2007). In line with this, the government initiated the provision of basic resources such as education, housing, water, and healthcare, to black South Africans who were denied these services in the past (Martens, 2007). They also introduced a variety of anti-discrimination laws such as *The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000* which aims "to prevent and prohibit unfair discrimination and harassment; to promote equality and eliminate unfair discrimination; to prevent and prohibit hate speech" (Christopher, 2002, p. 1).

The government emphasised the significance of education in transforming the South African society. It recognised that education is a key factor in empowering citizens to shape their destiny, think critically, act responsibly, exercise their democratic rights and participate in public life (Msila, 2007). Thus, a major challenge of the democratic goal of transformation was to redress, through social and educational reform, the inherited inequalities from the Apartheid era (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Democratisation and equalisation form part of the cornerstones of the education dispensation after apartheid. One of the main points of criticism of the apartheid education system was the inequalities between white and black institutions in enrolment levels and participation numbers. According to De Wet and Wolhuter (2009) the ruling party's ideology of the national democratic revolution, which guides the entire social reconstruction project, is the societal framework in which the current transformation of education in South Africa plays itself out. This ideology consists of a set of fundamental beliefs, as well as a surrounding socio-political programme which strives to achieve and realise this ideology (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). These fundamental beliefs can be regarded as; establishing representative democratic institutions, achieving a non-racial democratic dispensation, initiating a sustainable, progressive, goal oriented coalition with South African and Pan-African societies, and employing extensive social engineering "to meet the mass revolutionary challenge" (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009, p. 363)

Prominent goals for educational transformation was set forth in the *1995 White Paper for Education and Training* and includes; equity, efficiency, quality, effectiveness, and democracy (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). Further goals of educational transformation included; the creation of a single, non-

racial education dispensation that can accommodate all participants, an entire overhaul and democratisation of education management, upgrading and improving education infrastructure, and eradicating the legacy of apartheid in the education system through transforming curriculum (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). These goals aim to redress the gross levels on inequality in education funding between former-Model C schools as a means of achieving equity, to become more efficient and reduce the high levels of dropouts and repetitions, and to increase the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools. This prompted the introduction of Curriculum 2005, also referred to as outcomes based education. The curriculum of outcomes based education moved away from previous curriculums based on passive, rote learning styles and introduced a new learning style focused on creative learning and problem solving through active participation in the learning process (Msila, 2007). This new curriculum was developed to ensure that education reflected the contemporary needs of society. Its purpose was to change the education system and to transform society. It was seen as an answer to economic growth as well as a possible solution to the social and political ills in South Africa (Msila, 2007).

The efforts of the post-apartheid state achieved a variety of transformation successes in the sphere of education which include; increased access to schools, increased per capita spending on learners, improvements in the ratio of educators to learners, and improvements in the qualifications of educators (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). It further includes: the creation of a single national department of education with a formidable architecture of policies and laws to govern education, the creation of new institutional typologies and improved delivery of basic services, the creation of non-discriminatory school environments, as well as increased enrolment and matriculant pass rates (Jansen & Taylor, 2003).

The democratic government also made considerable efforts to reinvent the higher education system. One of the first of such initiatives involved the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (Moreku, 2014). The Commission identified several initiatives necessary to transform higher education, including; developing a single, non-racial educational system that caters for all participants, the renovation and democratisation of education management, the advancement and modernisation of educational infrastructure, and the elimination of the apartheid legacy within the educational system through curriculum transformation (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). This led to the report: *An overview of a new policy framework for higher education* (1996), where the National Commission of Higher Education suggested a complete transformation and restructuring of the higher education landscape in South Africa. To achieve this, *The Higher Education act of 1997* proposed the creation of “a single co-ordinated higher education system”, restructuring and transforming “programmes and institutions to respond better to the human resource, economic, and development

needs” of South Africa, redressing “past discrimination”, ensuring “representivity and equal access”, and contributing “to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international standards of academic quality” (Badat, 2010, p. 3).

The Commission proposed that the focus of South African higher education should be on goals of social development, economic growth, as well as, promoting and catering for greater access to the higher education environment (Soudien, 2010). This led to the development of the Education White Paper 3, which stated the principles and values to be embodied and promoted in higher education (Department of Education, 1997). According to Badat (2010), Education White Paper 3 put forth various social purposes and specific goals that higher education should strive to achieve. The social purposes of higher education includes the dissemination of knowledge, the production of critical graduates, as well as the production and application of knowledge through research and developmental activities (Badat, 2010). The aim of these social purposes are to contribute to economic and social development as well as democracy through learning, teaching, research, and community engagement (Badat, 2010). Specific social purposes include:

- To “contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge” which will help “address the development needs of a society” and socialise “enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens” (Department of Education, 1997, 1.3)
- To “help lay the foundations of a critical civil society, with a culture of public debate and tolerance” which will contribute to addressing “the problems and challenges of the broader African context” (Department of Education, 1997, 1.4).
- To commence the “production, acquisition, and application of new knowledge”, and to add to “the social...cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society” through the mobilisation of “human talent and potential through lifelong learning” (Department of Education, 1997, 1.12).

The key factors for transforming higher education include national and institution-level planning, funding and quality assurance (Sooklal, 2010). The principles and values promoted and embodied by higher education includes: public accountability, democratisation, institutional autonomy, academic freedom, development, quality, equity and redress, as well as, effectiveness and efficiency (Badat, 2010). To achieve this, some of the goals set forth for higher education in South Africa include:

- To “support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order” with the desire to “create an enabling institutional environment and culture that is sensitive to and affirms

diversity, promotes reconciliation and respect for human life, protects the dignity of individuals from racial and sexual harassment , and rejects all other forms of violent behaviour” (Department of Education, 1997: 1.13).

- Providing greater “access for black, women, disabled and mature students”, as well as “increased and broadened participation” to promote “equity of access and fair chances of success to all... while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities” (Department of Education, 1997: 1.13, 1.14).
- “To develop and implement funding mechanisms [which] support of the goals of the national higher education plan”, which will “promote quality and quality assurance through the accreditation of programmes, programme evaluations and institutional audits”, and “improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the system and, in particular to ensure that curricula are responsive to the national and regional context” (Department of Education, 1997: 1.27).

The policy set forth in 1997 by the *Education White Paper 3: A programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* remains the most significant policy statement with respect to higher education in South Africa to date (Badat, 2010). It identifies three key roles of higher education. The first is human resource development. It involves making a contribution to the economic, cultural, social and intellectual life of a speedily changing society through the organisation and utilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning (Moreku, 2014). The second can be identified as the acquisition, production, and application of new knowledge. It involves increasing national growth and competitiveness through integrating the needs of industry and social reconstruction with the research and training capacity of higher education. It requires continuous technological improvement and innovation driven by an organised and active research and development system (Moreku, 2014). The third key role involves the development of socially responsible and conscious professionals and knowledge workers who have globally equivalent skills and are aware of their role in national development and social transformation (Rabie, 2013). This can be labelled as High-level skills training and contributes towards growing the South Africa’s enterprises, infrastructure, and services through the provision of qualified person power (Soudien, 2010).

The National Plan for Higher Education was developed to achieve these key roles and give effect to the ideals embodied by the values of the new democratic state (Soudien, 2010). The National Plan for Higher Education advocates that staff and student profiles at institutes of higher education are representative of the demographic realities of South Africa (Soudien, 2010). Particularly, it promotes the representation of females and Africans in senior academic and administrative positions (Soudien, 2010). It further advocates that these race and gender profiles are reflected in student enrolments and

university graduates (Soudien, 2010). More specifically, participation and graduation rates should be successfully increased, particularly for African and Coloured students (Soudien, 2010).

This comprehensive agenda and policy framework for higher education has contributed to a plethora of achievements within the higher educational environment and system in South Africa today (Badat, 2010). These include, the establishment of a National Student Financial Aid Scheme, a goal-oriented and performance related funding framework focused on social redress for poor students, which led to an increase in the enrolment and participation of the rural poor and working class communities in higher education (Badat, 2010). The academic workforce and student body of institutes of higher education made huge strides towards gender equity, de-racialisation, and internationalisation (Badat, 2010). The most notable of these achievements is the increased number of first generation black students attending higher education institutions (Reddy, 2004). Research has shown that since the fall of apartheid, the student demographic at universities has changed to now consist of 80% black African students (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Furthermore, government funded financial aid programmes have contributed significantly towards increased attendance rates, performance and well as increased levels of school completions of people who would otherwise not be able to afford further education (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015).

1.3. The unique positionality of the ‘born free’ generation

Two and a half decades after the end of Apartheid, born frees represent the first generation of South African university students to grow up under democratic rule (John, et al., 2015). Because of this, they are viewed as being uniquely positioned in the socio-historical context of South Africa (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2018). According to Mattes (2012), unlike their parents, born frees receive a reformed education without major incidents of political interruption. Born frees have enjoyed being raised in an economy with a speedily growing middle class, as well as a reforming social culture (John, et al., 2015). In 2018, the born free generation constituted 44.74% of the total South African population (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This group of approximately 26.3 million individuals is comprised of 84% black, 8% coloured, 6% white, and 2% Asian/Indian persons (Statistics South Africa, 2019).

The term ‘born free’ epitomises the societal expectations placed on the born free generation (Norgaard, 2015). Born frees “are expected to be free of the burdens of the past, to be free of racial, political and economic prejudice and to flourish in a country which offers them so much” (Malila, 2013, p. 5). The democratic system is expected to provide for all the needs of the born free generation in order to succeed, especially education (Malila, 2013). This is further supported by the Presidential

youth day speech, which emphasises that through education the government commits to providing South African youth “with all the opportunities possible to enable them to reach their potential”. South African youths are described as the “vanguard” of the democratic revolution, having “taken up the struggles of a new generation” in pursuit of building “a South Africa free of racism, of sexism, of xenophobia and other forms of discrimination” (The Presidency, 2019).

Yet, the reality is that the born free generation has to contend with not only a brutal past, but an uncertain future characterised by an insistent continuation of poverty, inequality, and violence (Mattes, 2012). Due majorly to AIDS, some 3.24 million born frees are orphans having lost either one or both of their parents (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Born frees are born into one of the world’s most violent societies not at war, at any one time up to 45 000 born frees are in prison (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Of the 12.71 million born frees of eligible age to go to institutes of higher learning in 2018, only roughly 20% of the population group attend such institutes (Statistics South Africa, 2019). A lack of financial resources is cited as one of the main reasons why South Africans do not attend institutes of higher learning (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This is not helped by the fact that the born-free generation incurred proportionately higher costs than the previous generation to access a tertiary education (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Although participation in higher education has increased since the fall of Apartheid, and more than half of this group has completed secondary schooling or have a tertiary qualification, the born free generation is less likely than the generations before them to be employed (Statistics South Africa, 2019). In 2018, research found that 28.3 % of born frees were economically inactive tertiary qualification holders. This is a significant 20% larger than the economically inactive tertiary qualification holders of the previous generations (Statistics South Africa, 2019). This contributes towards an official unemployment rate of 55.2% amongst born frees (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Although born frees as a generation do not lack political rights, the statistical data shows that they continue to suffer from poor education, high unemployment, inequality, and increasing levels of poverty.

The damage done by Apartheid has been chronicled in great detail and even today, 26 years after the fall of apartheid it still consumes the dominant discourse in various academic, economic, and political settings (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Soudien (2010) states that:

The sheer weight of what apartheid left behind must not ... be underestimated. It produced at the structural level an obdurate legacy of social and economic inequalities which was accompanied and underpinned by a complex skein of discriminatory political and cultural attitudes, dispositions and orientations. (Soudien, 2010, p. 4)

According to the inequality trends in South Africa released by Statistics South Africa (2018), South Africa is known as one of the most unequal countries in the world. The South African Labour market is plagued not only by bad employment outcomes, but also by racialized inequality of earning distributions. Black Africans still receive lower wages than their white counterparts, because of this the labour market is still one of the largest contributors towards income inequality at 74.2%. (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Although South Africans have enjoyed a speedily growing black middle class since the end of apartheid, they face an ever-increasing official unemployment rate, and the bottom 60% of households are completely dependent on social grants to survive (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The democratic government struggles to provide adequate education and vocational training, as well as entrepreneurial encouragement and access to labour markets for majority of South African citizens (Cronje, et al., 2015). Even though, born frees have no direct experience of apartheid, their lived experience is one of persistent inequality within a democratic system (John, et al., 2015). Because of this:

the expectations and burdens placed on born frees—by parents, community leaders, and society, not to mention international observers—raise unfair expectations about both the homogeneity of the generation’s attitudes and lived experiences and the likelihood that this generation will exert agency in any one predictable way. (Norgaard, 2015, p. 44)

In this regard, the term born free has become a particularly persistent stereotype of South African youth born after 1994 (Norgaard, 2015).

1.4. The Fees Must Fall student movement

The transformative efforts put forth by the democratic government has not achieved its goal to successfully cater for the human resource, economic, and development needs of South Africa (Moreku, 2014). In addition, according to the *Report of the Ministerial Committee of Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* (2008): the overall state of transformation in higher education in South Africa shows a disjunction between institutional policies, and the real life experiences of staff and students.

During the end of 2015 and into the beginning of 2016, university students gathered in protest and demanded that education should not be treated as a commodity but as a right that students are entitled to enjoy (Langa, et al., 2017). This protest became known as *#FeesMustFall* and it was largely peaceful and supported by many stakeholders. Students opposed the increase of university fees, their

main complaint being that the majority of the poor black communities already could not afford the fees of higher educational institutes (Langa, et al., 2017).

As things progressed protesting students started uncovering larger social issues they wanted addressed. Many institutions had not had university wide conversations about what should be done to ensure the quality, success, and responsiveness to transformation objectives (Pandor, 2018). This has fuelled the popular view that there is inadequate responsiveness to popular interests in higher education (Pandor, 2018). The intentions of this movement is to address the unequal vision of the world as it manifests itself within universities through institutional racism (Chaudhuri, 2016).

Institutional racism can be described as:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (Macpherson, 1993).

Many students participating in the fees must fall protest argued that that they do not simply require free education but a free education that is decolonised (Ndamane, 2018). Students active in the fallist movement advocated not only for free education but for the decolonisation of universities as an alternative to the perceived shortcomings transformation thus far (Makgakge, 2020). The concept of decolonisation centres around three core concepts; decolonising power, decolonising knowledge, and decolonising ways of being (Makgakge, 2020). One of the main suggestions for achieving these imperatives is a renewal of educative curricula away from the Eurocentric canon of knowledge (Makgakge, 2020). The fallist movement of 2015/2016 highlights the gap that exists between transformation policy goals and the actual lived experiences of those within the transformed system (Booi, et al., 2017).

1.5. Exploring the policy gap

Oftentimes, the expected outcomes of a policy is not parallel to the actual outcomes achieved by the policy. This disparity between the expected and actual outcome of a policy is referred to as a policy gap (Brynard, 2007). As a developing country South Africa is particularly vulnerable to experiencing policy gaps due to poor policy implementation practices (Brynard, 2007). Some of these practices include; “poor dissemination of information pertaining to policy, limited awareness of policies, a lack of awareness of the roles and responsibilities pertaining to implementation that flow from the policies, and a lack of institutional will”, as well as a lack of consensus and common understanding of

transformation policy and its requirements (South Africa. Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institution, 2008, p. 14).

The policy process consists of four sequential stages, including: policy initiation, formulation, implementation, and evaluation (Sooklal, 2006). Policy formulation is dedicated and undertaken by top political bodies, while policy implementation is a rational, technical, and administrative activity put into practice in the grassroots level (Sooklal, 2006). Policy implementation involves carrying out the basic policy decision through a structured process which involves identifying the problems to be addressed and stipulating the objectives to be pursued (Brynard, 2007). One of the main issues contributing towards the existence of a policy gap in South Africa is the orientation of centralisation in policy development (Brynard, 2007). Policy formulation is devoted to top political bodies in the national sphere, while the implementation of these policies takes place in a different sphere; the grassroots level (Sooklal, 2006). It is the role of implementers to translate policies into action and are tasked with doing so within the diversity, complexity, and reality of their own context (Sooklal, 2006).

Majority of the democratic governments focus on educational reform has been centred on the radical restructuring of education through policy directives (Department of Education, 1997). Policy outcomes that involve restructuring are often mandated through ‘top-down’ implementation practices. The top-down mandate assumes that policy implementation can be achieved through a rational and hierarchical structure where the professional judgement of the implementers is superseded by the policy maker (Sooklal, 2006). An example of this can be seen in how government managed stakeholder participation and contribution towards policy development in higher education. Although the democratic government encouraged stakeholder participation in higher education, this participation did not extend past public debate and policy proposals (Pandor, 2018). Final policy for higher education was determined solely by policy makers, and did not involve a process whereby stakeholder contributions were reviewed (Pandor, 2018).

The distance between policy makers and policy practice in ‘top-down’ directives contributes to a lack of understanding of, and consideration for, those at the grassroots level assigned with implementing policies (Makgakge, 2020). Those tasked with implementing new policies choose practices and changes that fit best with their pre-existing beliefs, and which are consistent with the organisation’s existing culture (Sooklal, 2006). Implementers should use their local knowledge of the specific social and cultural context to apply intended policies (Sooklal, 2006). This local knowledge contributes towards the ability of policy implementers to better understand and overcome the hurdles and threats to policy implementation that may arise from their specific context (Brynard, 2007). Implementers of policy, taking into consideration the contextual needs of target groups, bring their own understanding

and interpretation to intended policies (Sookal, 2004). In this way, the original goals set out by policy makers are altered and adapted to fit the context of the implementer and target group. According to Fowler (2000) collaboration between policy writers and policy implementers is needed for these adapted versions of the policy to be evaluated, and used to mediate adjustments and change to the policy to better suit the context in which it is implemented (Sooklal, 2006). Assuming that policy implementation can be achieved through a rational and hierarchical structure, undermines the complex influence of institutional and social cultures, as well as, the micro-politics and environmental needs of the policy context (Sooklal, 2006).

The top-down mandate is based on the premise that all institutions are the same, and that they share the same attitudinal culture, interests and needs (Sooklal, 2004). A major limit of the top-down approach is that it does not consider the influence of individual contextual factors in policy implementation (Sooklal, 2006). Institutes of higher education are organisations with a history, they operate under external and internal constraints, and have formal as well as informal structures of power, alliances, and communications unique to each institute (Geijsel, et al., 2007). Because history and context contribute towards our inherited ways of being, it is important to constantly engage with these inherited traditions, customs, and practices in order progressively reform universities (Botman, 2008). According to Badat (2010), institutions and the government simultaneously pursue values and goals that are in tension with one another. These paradoxes raise social and political dilemmas, including that universities, often through their own thinking, structures, cultures and practices within the institution, act as powerful mechanisms of social exclusion (Badat, 2010). This mechanism of social exclusion prevents initiatives of educational transformation to fully realise its contribution to social equity as well as the social, cultural, intellectual, and economic needs and goals of South Africa (Badat, 2010).

Policy may serve many roles, including being symbolic and focusing on change rhetoric or material, providing resources and rights. Policy can also be substantive and identify courses of action, or they can be procedural, setting forth mechanisms of action (Sooklal, 2006). Within the South African context, most educational policies drafted since the inauguration of the democratic government in 1994 have been symbolic, substantive, and redistributive (Sooklal, 2006). Meaning that current South African educational policy mostly focuses on identifying what actions should be taken, engaging in educational change rhetoric, and redressing past inequalities (Sooklal, 2006). As a result, the educational policy initiatives of South Africa have placed little focus and effort on the research for successful implementation of its policies (Sooklal, 2006). An example of such a policy includes; the new language policy, which recognises nine indigenous African languages. Education policies allow these indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in schools (Soudien, 2010); however,

language and educational policies acknowledge the difficult task of translating policy into practice (Soudien, 2010).

The policy changes and directives of the democratic government have focused on dismantling the educational structures of apartheid and establishing new structures for funding, management, governance, and curriculum (Sooklal, 2006). The main aim of these efforts are to pursue equity, redress, and access in an effective manner (Sooklal, 2006). In this regard, institutional restructuring is a necessary condition in the transformation agenda of South Africa, but it is not sufficient to fully achieve transformation goals (Badat, 2010). The restructuring process is accompanied by heavily entrenched cultural challenges (Fullan & Mules, 1991). Structural changes without tapping into the cultural aspects of change does not produce the intended changes of transformation policy (Fullan & Mules, 1991). This is reiterated by Sooklal (2006) who asserts that the cognitive dimension affecting and affected by policy needs to be taken into consideration to satisfy the reciprocal relationship between structural and cultural changes demanded by a policy mandate. In other words, policy implementation is unlikely to be successful without engaging in both the processes of restructuring and reculturing (Sooklal, 2006). The process of reculturing involves the development of new values, beliefs and norms in line with a given policy.

Reculturing is the process of organisational change and involves the changing of action perspectives, as well as individual and collective sense making of these perspectives. Dealing with organisational change, transformation or reform, requires engagement with cognitive-affective processes where emotion specifically plays a key role. A balance needs to be created between emotions and cognitions on the individual as well as organisational level. In this way, restructuring through policy implementation involves structural change in the way time, space, roles and relationships are used (Fink & Stoll, 1998), as well as cultural change of the values, norms, and beliefs of those affected by the policy (Fullan, 1996).

1.6. Attitudes as a reflection of institutional culture

For successful policy implementation it is necessary to examine the culture of the policy context to inform structural and organisational changes (Fullan, 1996). Culture in this sense means the social organisation of a school staff which represents shared beliefs, customs, attitudes, and expectations (Sooklal, 2006). Culture plays a significant role in creating an environment for change (Burnes & James, 1995). The role of culture in a situation of change is to either confirm or deny the legitimacy of new change arrangements. The culture of an organisation acts as the foundation for the social

climate of that organisation. The collective attitudes and behaviour of an organisation's members at any one time represents the organisational climate (Burnes & James, 1995). Change projects that are in line with the collective attitudes and behaviours of an organisation are likely to be met by a supportive organisational climate (van Dam, et al., 2008). If the required change greatly contrasts the existing attitudes of those implementing and affected by the change, it is likely that stakeholders will resist the intended changes (Burnes & James, 1995).

Attitudes have many functions, including that they are value-expressive, contribute towards knowledge, utilitarian, and relevant for understanding and predicting social behaviour (Ajzen, 2001). Allport (1954) asserted that attitudes determine what people "see, hear, think, and do", and called attitudes "our methods for finding our way about in an ambiguous universe" (p. 806). They cannot be directly observed, and therefore need to be inferred from measurable responses towards an attitude object (Ajzen, 1989). Attitudes help facilitate adaptation to the environment (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998) through guiding information processing and influencing behaviour (Bohner & Dickel, 2011).

Attitude change, and resistance to change can be explained by Festinger's (1957) cognitive dissonance theory. This theory suggests that people seek consistency in their attitudes and perceptions. When people are confronted with information that is inconsistent with their attitudes and perceptions it causes discomfort, or dissonance. In turn, this dissonance motivates people to engage in actions to reduce the discomfort. Dissonance can be reduced through changing existing behaviours, but this is often a more difficult route. More typically dissonance is reduced in one of three ways: changing existing beliefs, adding new beliefs, or reducing the importance of the beliefs (Festinger, 1957). Attitudes cannot be directly observed, as they often represent a person's affinities or aversions to an attitude object. An attitude object can be, a global attitude that refers to the psychological object, be it a person, policy, or construct, or it may refer to behaviour or category of behaviours (Crano & Prislin, 2008). Attitudes can be divided into three elements: affect, cognition, and behaviour (Breckler, 1984). The affective component of attitudes involves an emotional or evaluative response to some attitude object. The cognitive component of attitudes refers to an individual's beliefs or knowledge systems about an attitudinal object (Breckler, 1984). Beliefs represent the information we have about the world. Although a person's beliefs may not always reflect reality, they form the cognitive basis for people's responses to aspects of the environment (Crano & Prislin, 2008). The expectancy-value model of attitude formation and structure proposes that people form beliefs about an object by associating it with certain qualities (Crano & Prislin, 2008). We learn to value qualities that are socially constructed as 'positive' characteristics while disliking those socially constructed 'negative' characteristics (Crano & Prislin, 2008). It is these readily accessible beliefs and the strengths of them that represent the prevailing determinants of a person's attitude formation. The

behavioural component of attitudes represents an internal state which exerts a degree of control over a person's overt behaviour (Crano & Prislin, 2008). The attitude-behaviour consistency theory suggests that a person's overt behaviour is most likely to be consistent with the attitudes they hold. Thus, favourable attitudes will lead to favourable behaviours, and vice versa (Smith & Terry, 2003). Overcoming resistance and creating positive attitudes towards change is dependent on the level of commitment and involvement of those affected by and tasked with carrying out the change (van Dam, et al., 2008). Involving stakeholders in contributing towards the change process allows for the change efforts to draw on local knowledge which can be potentially valuable for assessing whether change is required and what form of change is needed (van Dam, et al., 2008). It also contributes towards gaining the support and commitment of those involved in the change process.

Policy efforts often fail because policymakers do not consider that institutions social systems, and cultures, are not in line with policy vision (Sooklal, 2006). Deep level change becomes intrinsically linked to the psychological make-up and personality of the individual affected by the change (Burnes & James, 1995). Hence, culture and individual attitudes are linked, and affect the change process (van Dam, et al., 2008). Because of this the success of change is very dependent on individual attitudes that are positive towards the change process (Burnes & James, 1995).

1.7. The role of leadership in institutional culture

It is necessary for those whom a policy is intended for, to embrace the change put forth by the policy. Fullan (1992) points out that for any policy to be successful, it is necessary that a shared vision is created before proceeding with implementation plans. New lines of communication need to be opened up for growth and development to be promoted as creating a shared vision involves questioning fundamental values, beliefs, and behaviours through a complex array of communication processes (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). The implementation of a policy is an intricate process which is less about putting predefined policy into practice through government decisions and controlling actions, and more about furthering policy clarification through the evaluation of the implementation process and outcomes (Fullan, 1991). Because of the intricacy of this process, time and reflection is required before a plausible vision can emerge and stakeholders of policy need to receive adequate support to foster this collaboration (Sooklal, 2006). Collaboration amongst the various implementers of policy allows for the development of group consensus, the development of better change ideas, greater commitment towards policy outcomes, as well as helping to overcome resistance (Sooklal, 2006). Increasing the success of implementation is dependent on establishing a shared vision of policy

outcomes coupled with the planning and support of affected stakeholders collaboratively (Sooklal, 2006). Leadership plays a paramount role in establishing the structures, support, vision, resources, culture, and ethos of an organisation towards embracing change efforts (Sooklal, 2006). The role of leadership is to clarify the values, beliefs, and goals of an organisation through the sharing of power and influence which engages the human potential and commitment of all stakeholders. (Fullan, 1991). Communication is an essential process which guides the mind shift necessary to rethink the purpose and nature of change, but also contributes towards the establishment of understanding, shared meaning and trust which are all vital to achieving successful transformation (Sooklal, 2006). The role of leadership is to provide a non-threatening environment that allows for debate, the provision of resources, and the creation of an organisational structure which empowers stakeholders (Fullan, 1991).

Leadership practices are crucial in the reculturing process as they contribute towards setting directions, developing people, and redesigning an organisation (Fullan, 1991). Setting directions refers to the process through which leaders address the ambiguity and uncertainty of the boundary experience. It involves the creation of a shared vision for the future, helping groups develop a shared understanding of, and purpose towards, this vision, as well as producing activities and goals in support of this vision. Developing people refers to the process of using modelling, intellectual stimulation and the provision of individual support to positively influence the motivation and capacities of those belonging to an organisation (Fullan, 1991). Finally, redesigning the organisation refers to the process of strengthening organisational culture, building collaborative processes, and modifying organisational structures towards developing an effective organisation. These three processes play a significant role in contributing towards educational change, quality, and improvement (Fullan, 1991). An organisational culture refers to the historically rooted and culturally transmitted assumptions and patterns “thinking, believing, and behaving” of an organisation or institution (Sooklal, 2006, p. 7). Organisational culture relates to the identity of the community within an institution or organisation and influences the practices of an organisation (Mzangwa, 2019). It is the mechanism through which the vision of an institution is developed and supported and is “undergirded by the differing values, norms and beliefs of various social groups which are intrinsic to [institutes of higher education] and play a “major role in enhancing organisational and sustainable growth through innovative leadership and a sound sense of community” (Mzangwa, 2019, p. 1). Leadership in this sense is an influencing process which guides various factors. These factors include choosing objectives for an organisation and determining how these objectives will be achieved. It also involves motivating followers to achieve these objectives through the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork. Further, it involves the enlistment of support from outside the organisation and in order to effectively realize

these factors, leadership needs to be accepted and trusted by the members of an organisation (Geijsel, et al., 2007).

The new Constitution of South Africa set out to redress the discrimination and inequalities of the apartheid past. Education plays a very important role in achieving this objective. A restructured education system and new curriculum was seen vital in solving social, political, and economic problems in South Africa (Msila, 2007). As shown in the literature review the post-apartheid government over went a massive restructuring of the education system in South Africa. This included the higher education system, and as Badat (2010) highlights higher education plays a significant role in directing and ensuing social redress within society. In the face of a plethora of achievements, the generation born into these changed systems are unable to fully access and enjoy the rights and freedoms given to them by the constitution (Norgaard, 2015). The born free generation suffer from poverty, inequality, poor educational outcomes, and unemployment. University fees are unaffordable and institutional cultures do not offer a supporting environment in which transformation objectives can be achieved (Pandor, 2018). Overall, there exists a gap in transformation policy in the sphere of higher education. This gap is mainly due to a lack of consideration for those at the grassroots of policy implementation (Sooklal, 2006) and unsupportive institutional cultures (Brynard, 2007).

Students have not been included in the discussions and planning of transformation policy. Additional, universities have not addressed the negative impact of their own institutional cultures (Pandor, 2018). There is an overall lack of cultural transformation at universities which hinders the transformation objections of equality and social redress from being achieved. Institutional cultures need to be supportive of the transformation agenda. This depends on individual attitudes that are positive towards transformation and the transformation objectives of the given institution (Burnes & James, 1995). It is further influenced by good effective leadership that is able to guide the cognitive and emotional aspects of the change process (Burnes & James, 1995).

1.8. Problem statement

Even though born frees have no direct experience of apartheid, their lived experience is one of persistent inequality within a transformed system. The Fallist movement of 2015/2016 highlights the gap that exists between transformation policy goals and the actual lived experiences of those within the transformed system (Booi, et al., 2017). Because of this, Norgaard (2015) states:

the expectations and burdens placed on born frees—by parents, community leaders, and society, not to mention international observers—raise unfair expectations about both the

homogeneity of the generation's attitudes and lived experiences and the likelihood that this generation will exert agency in any one predictable way (p. 44).

Which brings us to the question: what are the attitudes of born frees and do these attitudes relate to the societal expectations, and social goals put forth in higher education policy?

1.9. Rationale and research aims

The history of popular resistance and participation that characterised the struggle against apartheid is reflected in the policy development of the democratic government which aims to be inclusive and open to public participation (Pandor, 2018). The Constitution of South Africa mandates Parliament to provide public access to, and involvement in the processes and all legislative work of Parliament (Pandor, 2018). This generated a lot of public participation and debate over policy proposals for higher education (Pandor, 2018). While the government did consult broadly, they did not consult or provide motives for their finalised policy (Pandor, 2018). Because of this, the final policy often did not reflect the submissions and expectations of stakeholders (Pandor, 2018). "Disappointment at this perceived 'failure to honour expectations' is at times interpreted as a lack of government commitment to transformation, and results in protests demanding real change and transformation. Such demands are made regularly with respect to higher education" (Pandor, 2018, p. 9).

Various researchers have identified that the policy of Education White Paper 3 has failed to achieve the goal of responding "better to the human resource, economic, and development needs" of South Africa. Educational transformational policies are constrained by deficiencies in the system, as well as, institutional cultures that are resistant to change efforts and mitigate against effective implementation practices (Brynard, 2007). Because of this, there is a great disjunction between the lived experiences of those affected by the policy, and the intended goals of the policy. The disjunction between transformation policy goals and the lived experiences of those influenced by policy is representative of a policy gap. One of the reasons for this policy gap is a lack of consideration for the cultural dimension involved in policy implementation practices (Brynard, 2007). This is emphasised by Mzangwa (2019) who states that many of the challenges of transformation faced by institutes of higher education stems from organisational cultures that do not consider the needs of the diverse groups within their institutions. Research shows that transformation initiatives focusing on organisational restructuring alone, have a limited strategy for successful change (Fullan & Mules, 1991). Successful change in, and through, higher education is dependent on policy efforts that are well thought out, implementers that are active change agents in the process, sufficient resources and time to support the reform, the presence of capable leadership, as well as an organisational culture

that changes along with structural changes (Sooklal, 2006). Therefore, for institutes of higher education to successfully implement the policy of Education White Paper 3, it is important to have a dual focus of restructuring through site based management, and that of restructuring site culture, or reculturing (Sooklal, 2006).

This study focuses on the process of cultural change as a neglected aspect of transformation and policy implementation in higher education institutes in South Africa. Universities have their own unique culture, attitudes, goals and worldviews that are historically rooted and shaped by the various stakeholders, staff and students at the institute (Brynard, 2007). Many institutes have developed their own policies for addressing transformation. Some historically white universities have acknowledged the active role they played in managing and maintaining the oppressive systems of colonialism and apartheid. They commit to achieving a just and equitable future by engaging in academic endeavours underpinned by the South African constitution that actualise human potential and is in service of the public good (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016). Universities further embrace transformation as a “strategic driver for ensuring success in teaching, learning and research”. It is a means of “attracting historically disadvantaged communities” and creating the conditions in which all students can thrive (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016, p. 3). Institutes of higher education set out to create institutional cultures of openness and critical reflection through re-evaluating the “spaces, symbols, narratives and embedded practices” that represent the institutions (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016, p. 5).

Transformation has been accepted as an overarching institutional imperative within the sphere of higher education. Despite this, the current organisational cultures at institutes of higher education are characterised by an individualistic, and divided culture focused on dispensing the meanings of institutional sagas and stories as well as teaching students what they are expected to learn, know, and how they are to behave in order to function effectively (Sooklal, 2006). This is emphasised by Hendricks (2018) who states that “despite two decades of restructuring, South African universities have been unable to shed the yokes of colonialism, apartheid, and patriarchy, and to re-centre on the Pan-African mission and vision statements that many of these institutions proclaim” (p. 17).

This culture does not support learning or the creation of a shared vision. Instead, it leaves little opportunity for collaboration and professional interaction for change and successful policy implementation (Sooklal, 2006). Culture in this sense can be seen a reflection of the attitudes of those within the policy context. Attitudes are important as they influence how we view the world, what we think, and what we do. They form a readily available affective and cognitive bases to which we refer to inform our behaviours. In order to achieve the successful implementation and realisation of transformation policy put forth by Education White Paper 3, transformation must occur in the

attitudes and behaviours of individuals in administrative practices, as well as in occurrences of interpersonal and intergroup relations on campus (Durrheim, et al., 2004).

This study aims to explore the attitudes of born free students in higher education as it pertains to transformation with the larger goal of gleaning the underlying culture with which born frees meet the transformation agenda in South Africa. Furthermore, this study aims to explore born free students' constructions of transformation and the impact of these constructions on their attitudes towards 'achieving' transformation in present day South Africa. To achieve this focus group studies with a sample of born free university students was conducted. Once the data was collected it was transcribed and analysed within the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. Using thematic analysis to aid the process, the collected data was sorted into themes that emerged from the data set itself. The hermeneutic circle, constructionist-interpretivist approach, as well as reflexivity were employed to ensure a thorough analysis of the collected data.

Universities formally embrace the new democratic, transformative policies, making it the ideal environment in which to study the extent to which these transformative ideals have been embraced in the attitudes of students at these institutes. Born frees are viewed as being uniquely positioned in the socio-historical context of South Africa, as they are the first generation of South African children born into a democratic system (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2018). They have grown up in a political and social structure attempting to adopt and live out transformative policies. Furthermore, born frees are also old enough to attend tertiary institutes of education and thus make an interesting and invaluable group to sample and study from.

To better understand the policy gap, it is necessary to explore the culture of those within the policy context. The shared attitudes of individuals belonging to the same context provides a glimpse into the social or organisational culture of the given context. In this way, the underlying born free student culture can be investigated through identifying the attitudes and shared meanings of born free students as it pertains to transformation. The investigation will further explore the current nature of transformation at institutes of higher learning, including its achievements and shortfalls as identified by born free students. To better inform the process of transformation policy implementation, an exploration of the attitudes associated with this policy from the population within the policy context is necessary. Achieving successful policy implementation at institutes of higher education is dependent on identifying, understanding, and changing the cultural perceptions, beliefs, behaviour, and practices of staff and students at these institutions (Sooklal, 2006). A better understanding of the current attitudes of born frees towards transformation can expand researchers understanding of the current transformative (and un-transformative) environment. Information about barriers and possible solutions may be valuable in informing future policy implementation strategies.

1.10. Research questions

As previously shown, higher education plays a significant role in promoting and achieving the overarching goals of transformation. But there exists a gap between the expected outcomes of transformation policy and what has actually been achieved by these policies. This gap is mainly due to a lack of cultural transformation within the wider societal, and institutional contexts. As the first generation to grow up within the transformative system, born frees are uniquely positioned and play a significant role in the continuing transformative efforts. This study is interested in exploring born free attitudes towards transformation as a means of gleaning the underlying culture with which the transformation agenda in South Africa is met. With the objective of answering the following questions;

1. What are the ways in which 'born frees' in higher education construct transformation in post-apartheid?
 - a) What are born-free university students' attitudes towards the idea and practice of transformation?
 - b) What are the barriers, and possible solutions, to facilitating a more meaningful process of transformation?

This study is interested in transformation in higher education as it pertains to the born free generation, and to what extent the policy goals of transformation in higher education have been achieved within this generation. This study is underpinned by the assumption that educational change is a process which takes place over time, is influenced by contextual factors as well as structural and cultural dimensions (Sooklal, 2006). Change is affected by the context in which it occurs and thus, it is important to recognise that policymaking and implementing is influenced by the context in which it is applied (Brynard, 2007). Policy efforts has failed to provide good quality education that transgresses and addresses the issues faced by South Africans today. The institute of Race Relations asserts that “As long as the country is burdened with poor educational outcomes, these problems will remain with us for years to come, with dire consequences for the future of South Africa” (Roodt, 2018, 11).

1.11. Overview of the chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction of the research problem, rationale, research questions, aims and objectives.

Chapter 2: literature review: The transformation agenda in South Africa has not successfully achieved its intended goals of non-racialism, equality, and social redress. The main achievements of transformation thus far has been on the structural and demographic reorganization of institutes of higher education. Insufficient attention has been given to the underlying social and cognitive methods that influence the change process.

Chapter 3: Theoretical point of departure: overview of the theoretical perspectives of social constructionism, diversity ideologies and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity.

Chapter 4: Methodology: a qualitative research design that makes use of focus groups, hermeneutic phenomenology, and thematic analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussions: an analysis of the collected data for this study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations: answering the research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

I will provide a brief overview of research that has drawn on Allport's "contact" theory before providing a critique that while inter-racial contact "may undermine blatantly racist practices and overt racial conflict, racialized patterns of reasoning continue to exist, often unnoticed and unchallenged" (Vincent, 2008. p. 1426). I will then discuss some key issues and challenges facing the transformation agenda within the sphere of higher education. Including issues of poor quality schooling, inadequate resources, and poor policy implementation which lead to the existence of a policy gap in higher education transformation policy. The lack of cultural change, and the persistence of a white-western culture that reifies culturally exclusive practices will be explored. This will be followed by a discussion about curriculum transformation and the importance of including African indigenous knowledge systems within the curriculum of institute's higher education. The importance of leadership within this process will be highlighted before concluding with a discussion about the born free generation, societal expectations of what born frees should be able to achieve in terms of transformation, and their actual experience within the post-apartheid context of transformation.

2.2. Providing a critique of the "Contact Hypothesis"

In 1954, Allport proposed that inter-group contact has the potential to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations. Further, he surmised that the quality of contact, and therefore its success in reducing prejudice, is dependent on four factors (Allport, 1954). The first factor is the need for equal status among interacting groups. The second factor is the need for cooperation and common goals while interacting. The third refers to the fostering and development of close outgroup relations. The last factor refers to the need for institutional support for quality contact and reduced prejudice (Allport, 1954). He found that intimate contact, more so than trivial contact, has the greatest potential to reduce prejudice. The Contact Hypothesis as Allport (1954) suggested, was unique as it suggested the opposite of commonly accepted theories of intergroup contact at the time.

Contact theory has formed the basis of many attitudinal studies including various studies conducted in the international domain. Hewstone (2009) examined the role of intergroup contact on social

integration found that both direct and indirect forms of contact have high potential to improve intergroup attitudes. He further found that:

Both positive and negative affect play a key role in mediating the effects of contact on intergroup attitudes. Contact affects not only explicit attitudes towards the target outgroup, but also attitudes towards other outgroups, the strength of attitudes towards the main outgroup, forgiveness and trust, and attitudinal, physiological, and perceptual measures beyond the conscious control of individuals. (Hewstone, 2009, p. 272)

This study concluded that although contact has the potential to reduce prejudice, it is not able to reduce prejudice on its own.

Research of attitude behaviour consistency at the University of Queensland, Australia aimed to examine mode of behavioural decision-making on attitude behaviour relations, salience of group norms, and the outcomes of in-group norms (Terry, et al., 2000). The results of this study found that attitude-behaviour consistency was influenced by the extent to which a behaviourally relevant in-group norm is attitudinally congruent. The results of the study also indicated that the extent of attitude-behaviour consistency was influenced by the attitudinal congruence of in-group normative information. A similar study, was conducted at the University of Queensland. Smith and Terry (2003) investigating the effects of normative and cognitive factors on attitude-behaviour consistency. Specifically, they examined the normative factors of in-group identification and in-group norms in combination with the cognitive factors of attitude accessibility and mode of behavioural decision making. The attitude-behaviour consistency theory suggests that a person's overt behaviour is most likely to be consistent with the attitudes they hold (Smith & Terry, 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the interplay between the “social identity approach to attitude behaviour relations...and the MODE model. Two experimental studies were conducted to examine the role of group norms, group identification, attitude accessibility, and mode of behavioural decision-making in the attitude-behaviour relationship” (Smith & Terry, 2003, p. 2). The results of this study gives strong support to the social identity approach to attitudes. This approach puts forth that if normative support is provided for a person’s attitude, their attitude-behaviour consistency strengthens because it validates the attitudes and behaviours appropriate within group membership (Smith & Terry, 2003). Both studies provided supporting evidence for the proposed interplay between normative and cognitive factors in attitude behaviour relations.

Pettigrew (1998) found that Allport's theory, or the contact hypothesis, faces several problems. These problems include; selection bias, over facilitation of contact conditions, that the hypothesis does not appropriately address the contact process, nor does it specify the generalization of effects of the

contact process on others (Pettigrew, 1998). The research conducted by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) found that four interrelated dynamics that facilitates attitude change by means of contact. These elements include; "learning about the out-group, changing behaviour, generating affective ties, and in-group reappraisal" (p. 66). Further, he suggested a reformulation of the contact hypothesis to include a fifth element, the development of group friendships, along with the dynamics as mentioned earlier. For optimal contact to occur they found that one of the most crucial factors for cross-group friendships is that groups have the time to develop these friendships (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Within the South African context the contact hypothesis has been vigorously investigated with students on university campuses. This is specifically because many historically white universities are now a multicultural context and offer an invaluable space in which to investigate the effects of increased contact between previously segregated groups. The study: *Affective Mediators of Intergroup Contact: a Three-Wave Longitudinal Study* in South Africa, conducted in the Western Cape explored the impact of contact on prejudice via affective mediators (Swart, et al., 2011). The results of the study found strong support for the mediated impact of intergroup contact on outgroup prejudice over time. Thus, confirming that positive intergroup contact can reduce prejudice within the South African context (Swart, et al., 2011). Finchilescu, et al. (2007) conducted a study investigating students' attributions to the lack of interracial mixing amongst one another on campus. The sample includes 1 068 black African and 1 521 white students from institutions including the University of Cape Town, the University of South Africa, the University of Johannesburg, and the University of Witwatersrand. The study "provided some insight into the concerns that students have about racial interaction. The role of culture and language is crucial. A large majority of students endorsed these reasons as an obstacles to interracial mixing" (p. 733). Finchilescu, et al. (2007) further found that although cross-race contact does lead to reduced prejudice and negative attitudes, it is limited by several factors. Similar to findings by Pettigrew and Tropp (2005), continued contact and the development of cross-race friendships are important and that university campuses provide the ideal context for such studies. In conclusion, the study found that although contact between different race groups has increased, the quality of this contact has not improved (Finchilescu, et al., 2007).

University campuses have been identified as the ideal environments to study contact theory. Studies conducted of students at universities in post-apartheid formally desegregated contexts has shown that the introduction and implementation of transformation policy has led to radical changes in the demographic makeup of staff and students at institutes of higher education. Researchers such as Alexander & Tredoux (2010), Durrheim, et al. (2004), Dixon, et al., (2007), and Holtman, et al.(2005) have found that the end of formal segregation has contributed to more contact, and therefore better

social attitudes amongst South Africans of different races. But, they argue that these demographic changes are not meaningfully reflected in the social culture of students on campus; students maintain informal social boundaries based on race, culture and language. This creates a social context which is not conducive to good quality contact. According to Allport (1954) good quality contact has the propensity to reduce prejudice, and in this case, reduce negative attitudes towards transformative goals. The contact currently being experienced between diverse groups on South African university campuses is rather shallow (Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2010), (Alexander and Tredoux, 2010). For instance, Durrheim, et al. (2004) research study argues for the importance of demographic transformation as well as social/cultural reform on university campuses. They found that although the university had adapted to transformation demographically, this transformation did not reflect meaningfully in the practice and lived experiences of students on campus.

Vincent (2008) in her insightful paper: *The limitations of 'inter-racial contact': stories from young South Africa* argues that although the end of apartheid has led to increased contact between South Africans, this contact has not contributed towards greater racial integration. Rather the paper identifies that this increased contact occurs in the context of unequal power relations between races which produces lopsided effect that does not reduce racialized patterns of reasoning, but rather reinforces racial practices (Vincent, 2008). The paper sets out to tell stories of race and identity as it pertains to undergraduate university students by drawing on discourses that reflect and reproduce existing relations of power and inequality. It further puts forth that these racial stories can be used as a lens through which contemporary dominant rhetoric of race manifests itself in the day to day lives of South Africans (Vincent, 2008). Those who formally share membership in an institutional setting experience limited and superficial contact with one another, especially as it pertains to contact between white and black members. Oftentimes the absence of overt conflict and physical confrontation between races on campus is seen as evidence of racial harmony. But, this assumption is misconstrued. Vincent (2008) notes that “apartheid’s legacy runs deep but across our society there is a significant failure fully to acknowledge, or respectfully and dedicatedly to engage with, it’s continued presence in our lives” (p. 1448).

Although much of the post-apartheid focus has been on social redress and creating a country, and therefore institutionalised spaces, free of discrimination. These goals have not been realised. Colonialism and Apartheid left South African society with many powerful institutes of higher education whose history and character are steeped in colonialism and racist discrimination, particularly that of white supremacy (Vincent, 2008). In her words:

Contact occurs within a context of unequal power relations in which ‘whiteness’ continues to be privileged over ‘blackness’. The result is that white people tend to benefit more from contact with the racial ‘other’ than black people, who often experience this contact as reinforcing their expectations of continued white dominance and privilege. While contact may undermine blatantly racist practices and overt racial conflict, racialized patterns of reasoning continue to exist, often unnoticed and unchallenged. (Vincent, 2008, p. 1426)

It is unrealistic to expect that the removal of formal barriers to inter-racial contact would naturally contribute towards social redress and racial harmony. In this regard the contact hypothesis is outdated and insufficient in its approach to prejudice reduction. Research shows that contact without meaningful interaction and social relationships between diverse groups do not lead to a meaningful reduction in prejudice. Instead it leads to a shallow form of prejudice reduction where “blatantly racist practices and overt racial conflict” are reduced but “racialized patterns of reasoning continue to exist” (Vincent, 2008, p. 1426). Researchers criticize the contact hypothesis for oversimplifying the nature of prejudice and neglecting the significant influence of social and structural factors in maintaining prejudice despite increased contact (Durrheim, et al, 2004). This is further supported by Vincent (2008) who identifies a lack of constructive engagement on topics of prejudice, stereotypes, and racism as diminishing efforts towards achieving the social reform objective of non-racialism. And Pandor (2018) who identifies that universities haven’t responded to popular demands for inclusive university wide discussions about the quality, responsiveness and success of transformation objectives within institutions. These researchers further emphasise the need for social or cultural reform that extends past mere contact.

2.3. Challenges facing Transformation in Higher Education in post-apartheid South Africa

In the paper: *The Challenges of Transformation in Higher Education and Training Institutions in South Africa*, Badat (2010) responds to the Development of Southern Africa’s request for ‘a diagnosis and analysis of the key issues of the challenges of transformation in institutes of higher education and training in South Africa. This includes an exploration of the achievements of transformation in higher education to date as well as the development of rank recommendations and interventions for the medium-term (2020) to long term (2030). These could be interventions that do not require policy, budget and legislative changes and issues that require new system design and policies’ (Badat, 2010, p. 2). He highlights the significant achievements in the transformation of higher education and

training institutions with respect to knowledge production and dissemination, the contribution towards social equity, democracy, and economic and social development. But despite these achievements there are still a number of significant issues and challenges that confront the state and institutes of higher education. Badat (2010) highlights that the poor conditions and quality of South African schooling hampers and severely constrains all efforts to improve the success of transformation in higher education. The study further highlights that there is an urgent need to improve the quality of South African schooling, as this will contribute to an overall elevation and improvement of transformation efforts in higher education.

Soudien, (2010) in the work: *Transformation in Higher Education: A briefing paper identifies South Africa* has made major strides towards creating a constitutional republic, and achieved a great success in increasing greater access to schooling. Unfortunately, the value of this schooling is not being fully realised for many children in South Africa and because of this children are not prospering at schools (Soudien, 2010). According to Soudien, (2010) this can be seen as a crisis in education and to better understand it, it is necessary to understand the nature of poverty experienced by South Africans. One of the most critical structural issues facing South Africans is that the economy is unable to provide for the large number of work seekers in the country (Soudien, 2010). These high levels of unemployment, lead to increased levels of poverty in the country. The impact of such poverty extends to the school setting, impacting the types of skills and capabilities learners bring into the educational environment (Soudien, 2010). Those who come from impoverished environments often do not have the kinds of skills and habits necessary to fully achieve at school (Soudien, 2010). Another issue identified is that of high drop-out rates, low pass rates, and low post graduate outputs. This is in part linked to inadequate state funding in the forms of scholarships, bursaries and loans. Furthermore, there is a growing need for an expansion of opportunities in post-school education and training, as well as for post-secondary education and higher education. Badat (2010) identifies an urgent need to enhance pass rates, graduation rates, and the quality of graduates at many institutions. In this way, the educational efforts made by the democratic government has failed to provide good quality education that transgresses and addresses the issues faced by South Africans today. This failure extends to university settings and contributes towards the difficulties students confront at universities themselves (Soudien, 2010).

Institutes of higher learning contribute towards economic growth and development through the formation of professionals (Soudien, 2010). Higher education, and investments into this sphere of education has been focused on the promotion of economic growth by preparing student to be productive workers for the South African labour market. But this approach is also not sufficient as

many graduates are dependent on factors such as industrial policy and the availability of capital, which are conditions of the institutional economy outside of the sphere of higher education. In this way the value of higher education is reduced to its ability and efficiency in contributing towards economic growth, which deprives higher education from achieving its wider social values and functions (Badat, 2010).

The article: *Transforming the post-school sector in South Africa: Limits of a skills-driven agenda* explores the planned post-school reform in South Africa (Maringe & Osman, 2016). It argues that higher education policy efforts have privileged a skills-based transformation agenda which is inadequate for serving the needs of a diverse post-schooling sector in South Africa. This skills based agenda is driven by the policy mandate which aims to ensure that those entering the labour market are qualified and competent to take up employment and income generating opportunities that exist as the economy grows and changes in the future' (Maringe & Osman, 2016, p. 122). This article further highlights that despite the good intentions that underpin the transformation process. Education policy has not fully engaged with transformation as a construct. Because of this, transformation and therefore meaningful change in the sector has not been achieved. There are a number of reasons why conceptualising sectoral reform on the basis of skills is inappropriate and inadequate for contemporary South Africa (Maringe & Osman, 2016). Such an approach ignores that knowledge and information is predicted to be the current and future basis for labour, especially due to globalisation. Furthermore, South Africa has an expanding post-industrial economy driven more by knowledge and information than it is by skills. The knowledge production role of the social project for higher education is overshadowed by discourses of jobs and job creation (Maringe & Osman, 2016). This creates a narrow conceptualisation of transformation which mainly focuses on economic imperatives. According to Maringe and Osmand (2016), various interrelated assumptions form the foundation of transformation in education. These include; the need for change and recognising that people affected by these changes require the development of new capabilities, as well as a space that corresponds with the intended transformation. Further there is a need to understand that the transformation process is not straightforward. The process often has to deal with human resistance, blind spots and contradictions which require a substantial financial investment to overcome (Maringe & Osman, 2016).

De Wet and Wolhuter (2009) conducted a study called: *A transitiological study of some South African educational issues*. In this study they put forth that access to basic education for all and the right to education in the language of the learner's choice were very high on the priority list of the post-apartheid government (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). Using a linear, comparative perspective they

examined enrolment numbers and levels, as well as language-in-education. Their research found that the objective of access to basic education for all South Africans has not been fully realised (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). Although legislation was passed in terms of the 1996 Schools Act which made school attendance compulsory, there were not enough funds allocated to implement a universal compulsory education on top of the fact that the net enrolment levels at schools have decreased since 1995 (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). Badat (2010) points out that currently public funding for higher education is inadequate and thus the effectiveness of higher education is undermined. De Wet and Wolhuter (2009) further found that multilingualism has been implemented, but that this implementation is not viable on a practical level. Rather, they refer to the aim of education in the language of the learner as nothing more than “political rhetoric” (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009, p. 366). The study concludes that the transformation process in education has not succeeded (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009).

Pandor (2018) conducted an investigation into the contested meanings of transformation in higher education in post-apartheid South Africa. The aim of the study is to explore and analyse the meanings of transformation in post-apartheid South Africa with a primary focus on the participants involved in the development of higher education policy, those responsible for its implementation, and the views of external stakeholders who play a role in higher education transformation (Pandor, 2018). Pandor (2018) puts forth that the meanings attached to the concept of transformation revolves around societal expectations of the role of universities and whether these universities are meeting the expectations and desires of society. Themes of access, culture change and decolonisation emerged as main topics of concern when discussing the meaning of transformation. There are a variety of different views associated with transformation. For some, transformation means entry into higher education, for others transformation refers to a change in the race composition of the student body and staff in order to correct past wrongs. Another significant meaning attached to transformation in higher education refers to a need to change curriculum to include previously disregarded forms of knowledge. Pandor (2018) further identifies that there is a rise in complaints about the absence of transformation in higher education due to inadequate responsiveness to the popular interests in higher education. One of the more prevalent complaints is spurred by the continuous alienation experienced by black students and staff at universities. Universities have not devoted enough attention to addressing discrimination and alienating institutional practices which reinforces the prevalence of discrimination in the higher education environment. Pandor (2018) concludes that there is a need to be more open about the complexities accompanying the challenges of transformation, and that there should be a greater consideration for stakeholder desires in broader societal discourse.

Maringe and Osman (2016) suggest four broad issues that need to be addressed for a more a more inclusive conceptualisation of transformation (Maringe & Osman, 2016). These include; understanding the impetus for change, recognising the different conceptualisations of change, capitalising the levers of change, and identifying barriers to transformation. These four issues can be described as frameworks of transformation, and precede and inform the policy implementation process (Maringe & Osman, 2016). They further suggest that knowledge needs to take on a new impetus whereby it focuses on the development of communities in addition to industrialisation and economic growth. Maringe and Osmand (2016) suggest that to achieve this institutes of higher learning need to shift their focus from labour market imperatives, towards the adult learner as the centre of attention. Such a focus ensures that the post-schooling sector focuses on the needs of communities, and not just that of the labour market. Giving “attention to the personal development and well-being of adult learners, their needs and desires for professional development and their agency in social change and transformation will promote personal and collective empowerment and social change.” (Maringe & Osman, 2016 p.136). According to Soudien, (2010) three dimensions, together, constitute the challenge of building a transformative climate for black students in the system. The first is the need for proper engagement with students upon entry, the second refers to the creation of a more dynamic staff makeup and the final refers to the need for a new, better suited curriculum (Soudien, 2010).

For higher education to realise its social purposes and goals it requires an enabling policy framework that “encompasses thoughtful state supervision, effective steering, predictability, continuity and consistency” as well as adequate state funding to support this framework (Badat, 2010 p.16). Often, the socio-political programme of transformation falls short due to demographic, economic, political and other realities (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). These shortfalls can be so great that the underlying ideology falls short of its mark. De Wet and Wolhuter (2009) put forth that the educational transformation in South Africa illustrates this shortfall in ideology particularly well. The lack of success of ideology driven educational reform gives credibility to abandoning ideology in favour of granting civil society full access to playing its part (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). This occurs in an atmosphere of open society and democracy where past errors are recognised and utilized critically instead of being preserved dogmatically (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009).

This is supported by Badat (2010) who identifies the need to enhance the capabilities of universities and academics through the reconceptualization of academic development programs that support students. Offering support to students is vital to ensuring equity of opportunity and outcomes in the sphere of higher education. Badat (2010) stresses that efforts to ensure equity of opportunities and

outcomes are futile if endeavours to address and change institutional cultures are not made. Many universities retain inherited class-based, racialized and gendered institutional cultures which diminish the educational and social experience of students and obstructs the construction of greater social cohesion. The paper further points out that although higher education should ideally contribute towards the goals of social justice, development and democratic citizenship, universities continue to act as powerful mechanisms of injustice and social exclusion. This mechanism is fuelled by the internal culture, practices, and thinking of such institutes, as well as external conditioning from the wider societal context. “The transformation agenda in higher education embodies paradoxes” (Badat, 2010, p. 7). Government and institutes simultaneously seek to pursue values and goals that are in tension with one another. This a mediation of competing goals raises social and political dilemmas which results in difficult choices and compromises between values, goals, and strategies.

Another issue is that of differentiation and diversity, which refers to the policy goal of establishing a national, co-ordinated and differentiated higher education system. Creating this system involved institutional restructuring and the combining of separate, previously established institutions. It also included the development of new academic qualifications and programmes for institutes of higher education. Badat (2010) highlights that although restructuring has been a necessary condition of the transformation agenda, it is insufficient. Institutional restructuring needs to be conducted in combination with other initiatives in order to achieve the economic, cultural, and intellectual development needs and goals of transformation in higher education. Historical cultural practices and traditions that impede the development of more democratic, inclusive, and intellectual institutional cultures needs to be abolished (Badat, 2010). Efforts towards creating institutional cultures which embrace difference and diversity are of significant importance in developing powerful wellsprings of personal, intellectual and institutional knowledge towards achieving social redress and transformation. Badat (2010) identifies the vital need to produce and retain a new generation of academics while simultaneously transforming the historical and social composition of the academic work force. Without this simultaneous approach the sphere of higher education is likely to reproduce the inequalities that characterized apartheid higher education.

The challenges facing higher education in South Africa create a policy gap, where the intended goals of transformation policies are not fully realised, and the outcomes of such policy implementation are not what was expected. The explored studies highlight that a major issue facing transformation in higher education is the lack of social reform within institutional cultures. Hendricks (2018) highlights that “[a]lthough universities have undertaken many reform initiatives post-1994, particularly around mergers, management, and access, these changes have not radically destabilised the embedded power

relations and forms of knowledge production and consumption” (p. 17). These issues are further exasperated by high drop-out rates, inadequate state funding, and the growing inequality in South Africa (Hendricks, 2018). Institutes of higher education have not given students adequate consideration in the transformation agenda, instead they have focused their efforts on mediating goals and economic gains through a skills-based agenda (Maringe & Osman, 2016). These studies call for an increased focus on the transformation of the organisational cultures that consider student and stakeholder needs in the transformation agenda.

2.4. Research in the field of policy implementation

Brynard (2007) published an article, “*The policy gap in South Africa*”, which highlights some critical aspects of policy implementation practices in South Africa (Brynard, 2007). The article attempts to identify where policy implementation gaps may lie, what problems these gaps may cause, as well as new ways to invigorate the implementation process. Policy gaps and faulty implementation practices are commonplace and not unique to South Africa (Brynard, 2007). Implementation failure has been attributed to the complexities of policy development. Oftentimes, there is a lack of reliable data from which policy makers can devise clear policy goals, implementation practices, and evaluation mechanisms. Policy may also set out to achieve ambitious goals which ultimately fall short (Brynard, 2007). Issues of ineffective government and corruption are major obstacles to successful policy implementation. A lack of co-ordination among political representatives, officials and government departments contribute towards issues of ineffective policy implementation. Financial, technical, and quality human resources are key factors contributing towards successful policy implementation. In this way a lack of resources, or the mismanagement of resources inhibits policy implementation from its initiation (Brynard, 2007).

The article further identifies that a major contribution towards the policy gap existing in South Africa is a lack of involvement of citizens in the policy making and implementation process. Although the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* makes provisions in constitutional and political rights to enhance citizen participation, poor communication and the lack of “accurate, reliable and understandable information to the end users of the policy” further exasperates the policy gap (Brynard, 2007, p. 360). The orientation of South African policy implementation in South Africa towards centralisation is a further example of this exasperation. Centralisation refers to policy practice where policies and policy plans are developed in the national sphere with little consultation with those who are expected to implement finalised policy (Brynard, 2007). The distance between policy makers

and policy practice causes problems for those tasked with managing policy. It leads to an imbalance between the different elements of policy, including the different units and machinery of government. For this reason, policy often fails to encapsulate the subtleties of initiatives at the grassroots level (Brynard, 2007).

There are a number of dimensions contributing towards the existence of a policy gap in South Africa. More specifically research identifies resistance, the imperfect convergence of interests, and disorganised interests of officials and implementers as major obstacles to effective policy implementation (Brynard, 2007). This is particularly true if leaders and the bureaucracy influence policy making and implementation in such a way that it diverges from the demands of ordinary citizens. The policy gap experienced in South Africa pertains not only to policy practice, but also to research in the field of policy implementation. Both political and bureaucratic players did not calculate the possible failures of programmes that could arise from formal policy considerations. More specifically, Brynard (2007) claims that the shortcomings of policy implementation are a result of deficiencies in the bureaucracy. Currently, the approach to the policy gap in South Africa is very focused on compliance issues and the desired results of implementation. This approach focuses on issues dealing with implementation at specific institutions, and rarely with generalisations. As such, Brynard (2007) suggests that research into policy implementation in South Africa that moves towards theory generation in surrounding policy environments is desperately needed. Furthermore, policy implementation research should have a dual focus on the outcome of policy implementation, as well as the process of policy implementation. This article argues that to understand the policy gap in South Africa, it is necessary to analyse the domain, context and interactive complexities of policies and policy actors. In this way, it is necessary to focus on the practice of, as well as mainstream research into, policy implementation in South Africa. “Policy implementers need a better understanding as to what hurdles are threatening and how they may be overcome in a reactive implementation mode” (Brynard, 2007, p. 364).

Although there is consensus among policy analysts about the existence of a policy-practice gap within post-apartheid South African education, the reasons for this gap is strongly contested. Many argue that the underperformance of education policy can be explained by the weak academic and professional knowledge base of practicing teachers, the underdeveloped infrastructure for modern schooling, the lack of material resources for learning, the restricting role of national examinations, and the weak capacity within the new state (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). A less supported argument is that the distance between policy and practice is more powerfully explained by the politics of transition, a conscious decision to scale back on radical reform interventions to reduce the amount of

political resistance and contestation that may flow from such actions (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). According to Jansen and Taylor (2003) a lack of wide systemic thinking and implementation capacity are major barriers to achieving transformation in education in South Africa. The focus of their study: *Educational Change in South Africa 1994-2003: Case Studies in Large-Scale Education Reform*, is limited to three specific interventions by the South African government: education finance reform, curriculum reform, and the teacher rationalization process (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). The study revealed that the multiple nature of initiatives targeting school-level equity, the conflicting logic of these different initiatives, and their uncoordinated nature, has significantly limited the impact of these reforms (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). In relation to financial reform initiatives there was simply not enough money available to translate into improved learning performance at the school-level (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Initiatives of curriculum reform also had a weak impact, this is mainly due to the inability of the state and involved parties to adequately align the new curriculum with resources, capacity and affected contexts (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Attempts to build the capacity of teachers through the teacher rationalisation process did not contribute towards in subject-knowledge gains among learners because the initiative was too far removed from the day to day behaviours and routines of teachers and managers (Jansen & Taylor, 2003).

Brynard (2007) further identifies a policy gap existing specifically within South African education policy. He refers to the devolved school model which has, since its implementation, seen the emergence of a number of conflicts. These conflicts are in part due to the gap in the balance between individual rights set out by school governing bodies, and the role of the state in creating a uniform education system. “On the one hand, there is commitment to greater participation in democratising school governance, but on the other hand, the democratic state is representative of the majority electorate and has to balance the needs of specific groups with the overall good of society” (Brynard, 2007, p. 361).

In his work: *The challenges of transformation in higher education and training institutions in South Africa*, Badat (2010) identifies a critical and immediate need to reconceptualise and clarify the scope, structure and landscape of the post schooling sector, as well as increasing the quality of post-schooling education and training in South Africa. According to Badat (2010), institutions and the government simultaneously pursue values and goals that are in tension with one another. These paradoxes raise social and political dilemmas, including that universities, often through their own thinking, structures, cultures and practices within the institution, act as powerful mechanisms of social exclusion (Badat, 2010). This mechanism of social exclusion prevents initiatives of educational transformation to fully realise its contribution to social equity as well as the social, cultural,

intellectual and economic needs and goals of South Africa (Badat, 2010). These paradoxes need to be creatively addressed through policy and strategy development that addresses multiple imperatives while balancing and enabling the pursuit of equally desirable yet competing goals (Badat, 2010). Along with an enabling policy framework and environment Pandor (2018), Soudien (2010), Jansen and Taylor (2003) identify that focus should also be placed on transforming and diversifying the existing curriculum to be more enabling to students.

2.5. Institutional and curriculum transformation

Dominant research epistemologies and methods at institutions of higher education are located within the cultural preferences and practices of the western world (Higgs, 2012). These practices include methods of initiating and assessing research that fails to acknowledge the cultural preferences and practices of African people (Higgs, 2012). “The marginalisation of African values in African education has resulted in the general Westernisation of education theory and practice in Africa” (Higgs, 2012, p. 1). Higgs (2012) states that due to the westernisation of education in Africa, the African identity has become “an inverted mirror of Western Eurocentric identity.” (p. 2)

In the struggle for the establishment of an African identity in education theory and practice, the African Renaissance calls for all critically conscious African educators to forcefully arrest the influence of Western Eurocentric culture on Africans (Higgs, 2012). The African Renaissance is a recent expression that attempts to distinctively reassert African ways of thinking and relating to the world through calling for the recognition of indigenous African knowledge systems (Higgs, 2012). According to Higgs:

People cannot be empowered if they are locked into ways of thinking that work to oppress them. Nor can people be empowered if they do not have access to those indigenous forms of knowledge which provide them with their identity as persons. (Higgs, 2012, p. 16)

African knowledge systems attempt to recover humanistic and ethical principles of communalism and ‘ubuntu’ embedded in African worldviews (Higgs, 2012). The African Renaissance proclaims that the nations educational paradigms should be rooted in indigenous African socio-cultural and epistemological frameworks, and all critical and transformative educators should embrace indigenous African worldviews (Higgs, 2012). It further states that educational curricula should be indigenously grounded and oriented. Additionally, curricula should appropriate research methodologies and practices that take into account indigenous African knowledge systems and are directed at addressing the needs of local African communities (Higgs, 2012). Through education the African Renaissance

seeks to demonstrate that indigenous African knowledge systems can be tapped as a foundational resource, and contribute towards political and economic liberation (Higgs, 2012).

Makgakge (2020) focused on how the concepts of transformation and decolonisation are used in debated of higher education change in South Africa. According to Makgakge (2020) the concept of transformation as a form of change within higher education lacks a definite interpretation. Policy on transformation in higher education define transformation as change based on the need to provide redress from the past apartheid system through areas such as representivity of the student population. The concept of transformation has been a constant theme for post-apartheid government policies in shaping the restructuring and change of the higher education system. Although considerable progress has been made in increasing access to, and creating more representative, institutes of higher education there has been a lack of progress in the realm of curriculum revision. This lead to the concept of decolonisation, as opposed to transformation, receiving heightened prominence as a change initiative. Those for decolonisation argue that transformation discourse and efforts have neglected to adequately address the Western Eurocentric nature of higher education in South Africa and how it neglects indigenous African knowledge systems (Makgakge, 2020).

Decolonisation as a form of change is based on the initial act of colonisation in South Africa and forms part of an ideological battle to reconstruct the values that underpin South Africa's democracy (Makgakge, 2020). Within the sphere of higher education, decolonisation is multidimensional and entails macro- and micro level changes, focusing on institutions and individuals. Decolonisation is aimed at higher education as well as society at large in its pursuit of human dignity, equality and freedom for all. Change as transformation of institutional cultures focuses on changing access to higher education by creating an inclusive culture through providing access to all races and adequate funding for the transformation agenda (Makgakge, 2020). It further includes dismantling university hierarchies of power that perpetuate inequality and a supremacist culture, and dismantling the historical identities of institutions that shape current cultures of exclusion. Change as decolonisation aims to eliminate the structural and social barriers that create exclusive institutional cultures by focusing on creating inclusive cultures through diversified academic discourse and dismantling cultures of whiteness and creating new university cultures centred in African knowledge (Makgakge, 2020).

Change as transformation and change as decolonisation both aim to achieve the same goal of shifting the knowledge domains of African institutes of higher education away from the dominant western canon of knowledge, towards a more African centred canon of knowledge (Makgakge, 2020).

Change as transformation has failed to move institutes of higher education away from individualistic notions of enlightened universalism which silences black voices and experiences in curriculum and limits their academic profession (Makgakge, 2020). Change as decolonisation aims to expand the curriculum cannon, making it more relatable to African students and allowing relevant aspects of society to be included in the higher education knowledge base (Makgakge, 2020). It traces the need for change to the history of colonialism, extending past the scope of apartheid aims to achieve attitude change, particularly in the sphere of teaching and learning (Makgakge, 2020).

The central focus of discourse on change as transformation and change as decolonisation, and the achievement of real concrete change in South African higher education has been on curriculum renewal and rethinking institutional cultures (Makgakge, 2020). Organisations in society are expected, by the democratic dispensation, to create inclusive institutional cultures. These inclusive institutional cultures are one of the ways in which social justice is achieved within South Africa. To change its institutional culture, institutes of higher education need to shift their focus to identifying practices, processes and structures that inhibit an equal experience within their institutions (Makgakge, 2020). This would mean that all students regardless of their race or background have equal access to institutions of higher education and the institutional culture they encounter is not an obstacle, but rather an asset to their success. Institutional culture and curriculum are intertwined. This means that for curriculum change to be successful it needs to be accompanied by supporting change in the institutional culture, and vice versa (Makgakge, 2020).

The article: *Leading the Process of Reculturing: Roles and Actions of School Leaders* focuses on the roles and actions of individual school leaders in initiating and governing the process of reculturing (Geijsel, et al., 2007). Geijsel, et al. (2007) analyse stories from three school leaders and their roles and actions during successful processes of reculturing. They retrospectively analyse the role of leadership power in these processes in an attempt to answer the question: how do school leaders use their power in such a manner that processes of reculturing are initiated and continued? They found that the process of school improvement and educational change is dependent on interaction between the roles of student leaders and the roles of teachers (Geijsel, et al., 2007). According to this article reculturing is the process of organisational change and involves the changing of action perspectives, as well as individual and collective sense making of these perspectives. The need for reculturing is often preceded by situations of ambiguity and uncertainty, which destabilises the shared cognitive understandings of those within an organisation (Geijsel, et al., 2007). Most people are not willing to engage with situations of uncertainty and ambiguity. But, sometimes circumstances may be such that they are unable to avoid addressing these issues. When an organisation has no choice but to address

such issues, it is called a boundary experience (Geijsel, et al., 2007). Leadership plays an important role in giving meaning to boundary experiences, as leaders take up the role of managing tensions that arise from the boundary experiences, as well as directing the co-construction of new meanings for these experiences. In this regard, leadership not only initiates and guides existing discourse, but also shapes the conditions under which such discourse can take place.

Dealing with organisational change, transformation or reform, requires engagement with cognitive-affective processes where emotion specifically plays a key role. A balance needs to be created between emotions and cognitions on the individual as well as organisational level. In this way, those who take up the mantle of leadership are also imbued with power associated with the role. Power is necessary as it enables leaders to make and enforce decisions in the face of differing opinions and interests (Geijsel, et al., 2007). This can be achieved using a heuristic approach that involves entering into an existing discourse around concepts and shared meanings available within an organisations social environment. This discourse can be viewed as a process of discursive meaning-giving where individuals within an organisation try to understand what is happening with regards to the change initiative (Geijsel, et al., 2007). The goal of this process is to work towards developing a mutual understanding, and system of shared meanings amongst those within the organisation. Having good, effective, and respected leaders to direct the process of reculturation is of vital importance and crucial to the transformation process (Geijsel, et al., 2007). Because curriculum and institutional culture are intertwined, a key to a more successful curriculum is having strong and capable leaders to guide the institutional culture in support of a curriculum. The born free generation having been born after apartheid, raised and educated within the transformed democratic system are expected to be these leaders.

2.6. The positionality of the ‘born free’ generation within the post-apartheid context

Race and class are still dividing factors for the first generation of born free South Africans, and these patterns of division continue to characterise the construction of socio-political life in post-apartheid South Africa (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016). “It would seem that fragmented citizenship and apartheid-constructed racial identities dominate political discourse and the experience of democratic citizenship” (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016, p. 272). The core contributor towards this construction is the establishment of a political reality which creates a narrative of inclusion or exclusion through policies of racial redress to create a more equal society (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016). This

undermines social cohesion and does not contribute towards the realisation of a national collective consciousness that is rooted in being a democratic and free citizen (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016).

Born free South African's identity as well as their political and economic agency is heavily influenced by "deep racial cleavages" which exist along the same fault lines as under apartheid (Norgaard, 2015, p. 268). Because of this there exists a persistent racial separation in the dimensions of identity, politics, and economics for all South Africans. The born free generation are not immune to these conditions "the identity of this generation is itself troubled – freighted by the past even as it aspires to future action and relevance" (Norgaard, 2015, p. 270). Born free South Africans "inhabit an in-between space where historical structures perpetuate an apartheid-like existence" and are moving in-between spaces of history, place, culture and education towards an identity and future that seems very unclear (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019, p. 1).

Furthermore, born frees are plagued by poor quality education and high levels of unemployment. Although the private sector has made a considerable effort to help the government fix at least some of the schools in the country, the government itself has done very little to address these issues (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Additionally, the technical and vocational training offered by the democratic government is in an even worse state. "The great majority of born frees emerge from the country's education system without the skills that the economy requires" and the government, business sector, as well as the economic community, acknowledge the poor quality and outcomes of the public schooling system in South Africa (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015, p. 24). Only a minority of the born free cohort obtain decent schooling and a subsequent education which endows them with the necessary skills to find employment and contribute towards the South African economy. Majority of born frees do not receive this opportunity and so, are forced to find alternative ways of bringing about their own economic emancipation (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). "Born free South Africans often have to create the very bootstraps by which they pull themselves up" and because of this many born frees' ambitions are very individualistic (Norgaard, 2015, p. 271). These individualistic ambitions are described by Norgaard (2015) as a "Darwinian fight for survival" (Norgaard, 2015, p. 271). "The unemployed among [born frees] are frequently described as a 'ticking time-bomb', while the participation of militant youths in disruptive and violent protest is also sometimes seen as the harbinger of some sort of 'Arab Spring' in South Africa" (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015, p. 1).

Research shows that many born frees are "politically disengaged and apathetic towards their ability to do something about the situation they find themselves in" and do not vote because they feel they have been let down by the political system in the past (Malila, 2013, p. 6). They identify a lack of

voter and basic political education, party subjectivity, information derived from friends and family, ignorance, accountability by public representatives, corruption within government, and hopelessness as the main reasons for why they do not exercise their basic right to vote at the polls. They define these issues as stemming from a lack of accountability by public representatives as well as systemic issues of the democratic dispensation which has adopted “proportional representation (PR) electoral system which tends to emphasise loyalty of public representatives to a party and not those who have voted for them” (Maphunye & Ledwaba, 2014, p. 177). Lack of accountability by public representatives was foremost among the problems identified by born frees as impediments to the country’s democratisation and that “despite minimal gains such as the attainment of franchise and human rights, public accountability remains the Achilles heel and a major stumbling block towards substantive democratisation in South Africa’s governance systems” (Maphunye & Ledwaba, 2014, p. 161). Not addressing these issues poses a serious threat to democratic institutions, the rule of law, and the stability of the country and politics in South Africa and will continue to manifest itself through disruption and violence instead of through formal political processes and structures (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Born frees feel marginalised in relation to the democratic process, education, and a better environment for all and tend to place the responsibility for these conditions on the part of the government (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019). These factors have contributed towards a form of informal politics which often leads to disruptive and violent protests generally referred to as ‘service delivery protests’ (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015).

Despite their disengagement in the political mainstream, South African youth have created alternative spaces in which they deconstruct and reconstruct the notion of ‘born free’ and the implications it has for their socio-political participation (Sokfa, et al., 2015). Sokfa, et al. (2015) through an analysis of *Mzansi Stories*, a production created by born frees, describe the variety of issues this generation deals with in order to make sense of their individual and collective identities as South Africans. *Mzansi Stories* show how South African youth grapple with what is, and is not true about the ‘born free’ identity construct that has been imposed on them and enables the larger South African society to gain an “understanding of how young South Africans are engaging the meaning of Born Free identity in relation to prevailing socio-political circumstances within the nation” (Sokfa, et al., 2015, p. 106). In this way, *Mzansi Stories* bring up critical questions regarding born free identity in relation to time, and the study highlights the need to engage with the born free identity in a manner that goes beyond political history. Through its analysis of the play *Mzansi Stories* this study found that the born free generation “calls for identities that acknowledge the past but are focused on the present and the future” (Sokfa, et al, 2015, p. 119). McKinney and Van Pletzen (2004) found that born free students held very specific attitudes towards the past which shaped their attitudes towards their future in a

democratic South Africa. Their research revealed that students at higher institutes of learning wanted to avoid confrontation with the apartheid past because they see it as irrelevant to their everyday experience and express a strong desire to move away from the past and forward towards better things (McKinney & van Pletzen, 2004). Born frees express a reluctance to engage in the apartheid past due to their strong desire for a tolerant new South Africa. But they are extremely conscious of this past and are uncomfortably aware of its threats to their desires for a new dispensation (McKinney & van Pletzen, 2004). These seemingly conflicting perceptions play themselves out in the identities that born free students construct for themselves (McKinney & van Pletzen, 2004).

Born frees do not feel like they are being heard by politicians or journalists, and this is reflected in their “strong sense of disempowerment, disillusionment, and distrust of both politics and the media” (Malila & Garman, 2016, p. 64). They do not believe that the institutions of politics and media have their interest at heart, rather they identify very strongly with, and attach value and truth to, individuals who have proven themselves as trustworthy (Malila & Garman, 2016). Despite the desire to be well informed and to understand the state of affairs in which they live, born frees are suspicious of both the media and politicians (Malila & Garman, 2016). Research has shown that South African news media have marginalised their role in born frees’ civic and political identities by failing to engage with born frees in their stories. Because of the lack of appropriate media coverage of the born free generation, especially in politics and education, they have come to be viewed as a generation who are “voiceless, inactive and disinterested - as citizens who contribute little to democracy” (Malila, 2014, p. 32). Research has further found that even though South African youths are stigmatised as being politically disengaged and inactive in combating the huge social issues facing South Africa, many are working hard to positively influence and uplift their own lives, as well as the lives of their families and communities (Malila & Garman, 2016).

Born frees view contemporary South African society as one that is divided. They believe that since the passing of former president Nelson Mandela, the efforts of nation-building and the use of discourse such as the ‘rainbow nation’ has been insincere (Brits, 2019). “They acknowledged that there had been success in uniting the nation under the pretext of strength in diversity and patriotism in sport, but they felt that inherent in these aspects was a sense of separation and division” (Brits, 2019, p. 52). Many born frees believe that the nation-building discourse of transformation by the current ruling party is simply an act of loyalty to former president Mandela (Brits, 2019). Born frees do not necessarily identify with current definitions of national identity, nor do they really believe that one existed at all (Brits, 2019). Their lived experience is characterised by marginalising practices of ethnic and cultural identification which has contributed towards keeping South Africa

“untransformed” (Brits, 2019, p. ii). Mandela’s dream of transcending the echo chambers of division within South Africa has not been achieved (Norgaard, 2015). Instead, “the mantle of leadership and the responsibility of serving as Mandela’s generation is one that many born frees do not accept and in fact criticize.” (Norgaard, 2015, p.44)

Born free South Africans are appreciative of the legal freedoms they have due to democracy, but there exists a pervasive dissatisfaction and disappointment with governance throughout the generation (Norgaard, 2015).

Born frees are now trapped much more by other factors: low economic growth, high crime, poor education, few opportunities for skills training, labour law which raises barriers to entry into the labour market, and racial preferencing legislation which may be designed to give them a leg up but which often operates in practice as a leg-iron. (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015, p. 30).

These are serious problems that extend past the legacy of apartheid and contribute towards the continued economic exclusion and political alienation of born frees (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015).

Although post-apartheid South Africa offers all South Africans political freedom, franchise rights, and the ability to vote in government elections, The ANC government has failed to provide the great majority of born frees with decent schooling, vocational training, access to the labour market, and entrepreneurial incentives (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). South Africans are growing impatient with the ineffective governance which fails to meet their basic needs, because of this they are turning towards means of self-actualisation and becoming more anti-government, pro-private enterprise focused which favours the individual initiative (Norgaard, 2015).

Born frees do not possess uniform views when it comes to the psychological, political, and economic aspects of democracy and governance (Norgaard, 2015). They are less committed to democracy than the generations before them, possess a “pervasive cynicism” about governance, and have a wide range of political and civic attitudes that are organised around race and class, which give way to fractured political engagement (Norgaard, 2015, p. 271). They are more concerned with factors of service delivery and tangible benefits than they are with the normative and ideological aspects of democracy (Norgaard, 2015). “Whatever advantages might accrue from the new political experiences of political freedom and a regular, peaceful electoral process, are diminished by frustrating encounters with the political process, victimisation by corrupt officials, and enduring levels of unemployment and poverty” (Mattes, 2011, p. 14).

Furthermore, literature has shown that education plays a very important role in developing and teaching young people about democracy, and how to be responsible citizens in a democracy (Malila, 2013). What this means is that the South African education system, which plays a key role for developing a citizen identity, is falling short (Malila, 2013). Born frees do not have a distinctive take on their identity, much less that of the economy and democratic institutions (Norgaard, 2015). According to Norgaard (2015) “the born free generation is a generation in the making, a generation that seeks an identity even as an identity seems to be thrust upon it” (p. 78). Despite this, born frees are still optimistic and have positive attitudes towards achieving the goals of transformation in their future. Born frees, may be politically disengaged, but this does not mean that they are completely disengaged from society. Born frees are active in their communities, they take up civic duties out of their own. To this degree, born frees show a willingness to positively engage, at least to some degree, with the change process. They are still hopeful and have positive attitudes towards achieving the goals of transformation in their future.

2.7 Conclusion:

Studies show that the contact hypotheses put forth by Allport (1954) faces several issues and does not adequately conceptualise or address the contact process (Pettigrew, 1998). The social environment has significant influence on quality of contact which in turn influences the potential for contact to reduce prejudice. Specifically, the reduction of prejudice is dependent on good quality contact that results in the development of positive friendships with diverse others (Swart, et al., 2011). Within the South African context this research has prominently been conducted within the university context. The quality of contact between diverse students at universities in South Africa is poor and have achieved a limited development of cross group friendships (Finchilescu, et al., 2007). Despite the implementation of transformation policies, the adopted transformation does not translate meaningfully into the lived experiences and practices of students. Instead the current outcomes of this policy is a shallow transformation free of blatant racist practices and overt racial conflict but not free of the underlying culture dominated by racialized patterns of reasoning (Vincent, 2008).

Some of the main challenges facing transformation in post-apartheid higher education show that the value of schooling and education in South Africa is not being fully realised (Soudien, 2010). Instead research shows the higher education system struggles with low pass rates, high drop-out rates, and low post graduate outputs. These issues are further exasperated by conditions of poverty, poor funding, and high levels of unemployment even after graduation (Badat, 2010). Maringe and Osman (2016) argue that skills based agenda of the current system of higher education has reduced the value

of education down to its ability to efficiently contribute towards economic growth. This is a limiting approach that does not assist in achieving the wider social values and redress underpinned by transformation policy. This is described as a gap in the transformation policy implementation process (Brynard, 2007). By focusing on an economic agenda the fact that the internal practices, thinking, and culture universities act as powerful mechanisms of social exclusion and injustice is ignored (Badat, 2010).

Many South African universities are historically situated and embody the cultural preferences and practices underpinned by the western canon of knowledge (Higgs, 2012). Because of this there has been very little progress towards incorporating and including indigenous African knowledge system within educative curricula (Makgake, 2020). This is one of the main reasons why the central discourse of transformation in higher education centres on curriculum renewal and the re-thinking of institutional cultures. Key to this type of change is good effective leadership. Research shows that the born free generation who are expected to lead the transformation agenda in post-apartheid South Africa lack, the skills, resources, and support necessary to do so (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Instead they feel alienated, and excluded from the wider political and social context. Withdrawing from the larger transformational efforts towards smaller self-driven efforts within their local contexts (Sokfa, et al., 2015).

What this literature review has shown is that thus far the transformation agenda in South Africa has yet to achieve its intended goals. More emphasis would need to be placed on the influence of cognitive, emotional, and social factors in order to realise cultural transformation within institutes of higher education. The research in this chapter emphasise the need to continually develop an educational system with policies and a curriculum that addresses the needs of the student population, including inclusive, open, critical discussions about transformation, its objectives, and meanings.

Chapter 3: Theoretical point of departure

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the theoretical underpinnings of this study. It will introduce social constructionism as an epistemology and discuss the key tenets of this perspective. Furthermore, the influence of socially constructed belief systems and the impact of diversity ideologies on intergroup relations will also be explored. This includes brief discussions of the colorblind, multicultural and polycultural diversity ideologies. Additionally, the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity will be discussed as a process towards becoming less prejudice, and more accepting of diverse cultures and others. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief theoretical framework from which the research questions proposed in this study will be approached. It does not present a specific or set theoretical framework as much as it identifies the theoretical underpinnings and perspectives that potentially give meaning to the analysis and findings of the data for this study.

3.2. Social constructionism

Social constructionism is a theory of knowledge that examines the development of jointly constructed understandings of the world that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality (Parker, 1998). Social constructionism is essentially a social psychology and is underpinned by epistemology. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, with a focus on the distinction between justified belief and opinion, its theory, validity, and scope (Andrews, 2012). Social constructionism asserts that our knowledge of the world is constructed through social interaction. In this way our knowledge and understanding of the world and the people in it are products of human thought, language, and social interaction (Burr, 2018). Additionally, social constructionism argues that the way in which people commonly understand the world is historically and culturally specific. The categories and concepts people use to understand the world depends on when and where those people are in the world (Burr, 2018).

In this regard, the tenets of social constructionism tend to lean towards the doctrine of relativism. Relativism argues that knowledge, truth, and morality are not absolute but rather exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context (Andrews, 2012). It further purports that because we derive our knowledge from our various perceptions and representations of the world, we cannot judge them according to an assumed objective reality. In this regard relativists do not prefer one account over another. Rather they regard all accounts as equally valuable in contributing towards a better understanding of the world (Parker, 1998). Similarly, the social constructionist approach argues that

all knowledge is derived from perspectives that serve some or other interest, and because of this there can be no real objective truth (Burr, 2018).

Knowledge is, therefore, seen not as something that a person has or does not have, and is neither correct nor incorrect, but is something that people create and enact together. Our social interactions are capable of producing a variety of possible social constructions of events. What we regard as knowledge is, therefore, one possible construction among many (Burr, 2018, p. 7).

Within this perspective knowledge is constructed between people. It argues that topics such as emotion, motivation, personality, and attitudes are social constructions developed through social interaction and language and not structural features of the human psyche. At its core social constructionism challenges the individualistic, essentialist and intrapsychic model of the person (Burr, 2018). In this regard social constructionism takes a critical stance towards commonly accepted versions of knowledge and assumptions about how the world appears to be. Burr (2018) gives a good example of how social constructionists critically look at commonly held assumptions and the impact of these assumptions on those who hold them, and those whom these assumptions are about.

It may seem obvious to us that there are two naturally occurring categories of human being, men and women. But social constructionism bids us to seriously question whether the categories “man” and “woman” are simply a reflection of distinct types of human being and to consider instead that they are categories constructed by people themselves in the course of social interaction ... being a man or a woman is much more socially negotiated than we might have imagined. The same is true of other highly socially relevant concepts, such as ‘race.’ (Burr, 2018, p. 4)

When people interact with the social world, the social world in turn has an influence on people. One such influence is habituation, where frequently repeated actions are cast into a pattern that can be reproduced without much effort (Andrews, 2012). This frees people to engage in innovation and over time the meaning of these habituations become embedded as routines forming a general store of knowledge. This general store of knowledge represents a variety of different social constructions which in turn invites specific kinds of action and practice from the people who adhere to them (Andrews, 2012). People’s shared constructions of the world tend to maintain certain patterns of social interaction, attitudes, and practices while excluding others (Parker, 1998). In this way, constructions of the world further contribute towards maintaining patterns of inequality within society (Andrews, 2012). The common assumption of ‘naturally occurring categories’ of human being are often used to defend such inequalities (Burr, 2018). Social constructionism argues that in order to

destabilise and impede the assumptions that foster inequitable practices the existence of such ‘natural categories’ and habitualizations must be challenged. This is just one of many ways in which social constructionism takes a critical stance toward commonly held assumptions about how the world appears to be.

Social constructionism has been criticised for being anti-realist by asserting that knowledge is not a result of observations of reality but are instead socially constructed. By arguing that no objective reality exists, and that no one social construct of knowledge can be more legitimate than the other. Critics argue that the legitimacy and meaningfulness of such research becomes questionable especially in the field of empirical research and medical sciences (Burr, 2018). In this regard it’s important to note the epistemological, and not ontological underpinnings, of the social constructionist perspective.

Furthermore, social constructionism argues that social constructions of knowledge within societies are politically motivated (Burr, 2018). Education as a process of facilitated learning and knowledge production is not a neutral process. Politics plays a major role in the development and funding of an education system and those in power who formulate education policies always have some form of political, social, or cultural goal in mind (Msila, 2007). In this regard, politics plays a major role in directing the type of knowledge and learning society has access too through the formal education system. The educational context provides a foundation from which people are able to form their social identities. As previously identified developing intercultural sensitivity involves evolving ones one social identity to become more inclusive, interculturally aware and competent (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Social identity influences the way people see themselves and in turn the way they interact with others by allowing them to be part of groups and find a sense of belonging in their social world. It contributes towards shaping and framing a person’s understanding of themselves and their relationships with others (Hogg & Smith, 2007). The type of learning facilitated through formal education has a major impact on the social identity formation of students, and in turn the way they will interact with others in society. In this way the education system and the political motivations behind that system plays a major role in shaping the social structure of society (Msila, 2007).

3.3. Socially constructed belief systems and diversity ideologies

Belief systems are used by people across cultures in their everyday lives, and are often referred to as “lay theories”. Belief systems primarily serve peoples epistemic needs to understand and explain their social world (Levy, et al., 2012). These belief systems provide a description of the as well as serving individual social and psychological needs such as bolstering self-esteem, contributing towards a sense

of self control, and helping maintain close social relationships. Individual and environmental factors such as one's familial environment, local community context, and the wider cultural environment, affect the particular belief systems an individual may endorse. Belief systems are not entirely stable, rather they can be activated or deactivated depending on the context in which a person finds themselves. Belief systems which are more frequently activated are more likely to be applied to one's experiences and observations of the world (Levy, et al., 2012). The endorsement and prevalence of particular belief systems vary across cultures and although they may not represent a "correct" social reality they do have important social consequences (Levy, et al., 2012). Research has consistently shown that these 'lay theories' influence the way in which people perceive, judge and treat cultural or ethnic outgroup members (Levy, et al., 2012).

Studies on the malleability of human attributes offer a good example of these belief systems and the consequences of these belief systems for both the holder and the social targets of these beliefs. Hong, Levy and Chui (2001) found that certain beliefs have a universal aspect to them and can be found across cultures and age groups, varying across time and place. An example of such a belief system is the malleability of human attributes. Beliefs about the degree to which human attributes or qualities such as personality, intelligence, or morality can change is mostly divided into two theoretical perspectives (Levy, et al., 2012). The entity theory views human attributes as fixed entities and their qualities as stable characteristics. The incremental theory argues that people's attributes can grow or change and their qualities are dynamic (Hong, et al., 2001). The consequences of these belief systems have also been identified. Holders of the entity perspective make more extreme trait judgements of outgroups, be it racial, ethnic, or occupational (Levy, et al., 2012). They tend to attribute outgroup behaviours to enduring internal traits and are less likely to perceive between group commonalities (Hong, et al., 2001). Research shows that people who endorse the entity theory are more judgemental of what could be perceived as neutral and negative behaviours. They are less willing to socialise with others who present with these behaviours, and are also less likely to help disadvantaged others (Hong, et al., 2001). In contrast, those who endorse the incremental theory tend to be more flexible in their judgement of others, they tend to see others as individuals and not just members of a group (Levy, et al., 2012). They are also more likely than those who endorse the entity theory to approach and befriend people from other groups (Hong, et al., 2001). The entity theory and incremental theory show how the different belief systems, or lay theories, people endorse have positive and negative consequences on the way in which they perceive, understand, and treat others in their environment.

Belief systems not only offer people a description of the world they live in, but they can also prescribe how people should behave, or how the world should be (Levy, et al., 2012). Rosenthal and Levy (2010) refer to the prescriptions of belief systems as ideologies or approaches. Intergroup or

interethnic ideologies reflect people's beliefs about diversity (Ryan, et al., 2010). These ideologies refer to individual beliefs regarding the nature of intergroup relations and how they can be improved in culturally diverse societies and are also called diversity ideologies. In this regard scholars identified the colorblind, multicultural and polycultural ideologies which each make distinct assumptions about the sources and solutions to discrimination and intergroup conflict (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010).

The colorblind diversity ideology assumes that categorizing people by their social groups lead to prejudice and conflict. Thus, they focus on de-emphasizing the differences between groups as a means of reducing prejudice (Apfelbaum, et al., 2008) and assimilation into dominant power structures (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Additionally, choosing to ignore the impacts of race and racism through the idea of 'race neutrality' in social, political, economic, and legal issues only proliferates the exclusion of alternative racially conscious interventions capable of producing social equity (Crenshaw, et al., 2019).

Colorblindness at the most basic level mobilizes a metaphor of visual impairment to embrace a simplistic and misleading affirmation of racial egalitarianism. Its emphasis on colour imagines racism to be an individualistic aversion to another person's pigment rather than a systemic skewing of opportunities, resources, and life chances along racial lines (Crenshaw, et al., 2019, p. 4).

By contrast the multicultural diversity ideology centres on the idea that diversity and difference should be celebrated rather than ignored. The multicultural approach suggests that prejudice stems in part from a lack of knowledge and appreciation for other groups and that it can be decreased through learning about diversity and the differences between groups (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). It further asserts that through learning and developing an understanding and appreciation of different groups, negative attitudes towards these different groups will be reduced (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). This approach focuses on learning about important differences between groups, appreciating their positive contributions to society, and recognising each group's right to maintain its own traditions and culture (Levy, et al., 2012). The multicultural approach challenges the notion that society shares a 'superior' or 'common' culture. It validates not only the culture of the marginalised, but validates the cultures of all racial and ethnic groups (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). Multiculturalism has been shown to be related to a greater interest in contact with racial or ethnic outgroup members, lower in-group bias, and lower levels of ethnocentrism (Correll, et al., 2008). But, these effects have also shown to vary across the racial or ethnic groups. Some research has shown that by drawing attention to group differences multiculturalism can increase stereotyping, prejudice, and bias (Ryan, et al., 2010). Studies on the multicultural approach have also yielded mixed results for its effectiveness in reducing prejudice.

3.4. A developmental model of intercultural sensitivity

Diversity ideologies can also be explored as factors in a phase model of intercultural development. Bennet (1986) put forth a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity that features people's worldviews as a progression from a simple ethnocentric complex to a more complex ethno-relative orientation. This model describes the standard ways in which people experience, interact, and interpret cultural differences as individuals, within groups, and organisations. It proposes a developmental continuum along which people may progress towards a deeper appreciation and understanding of cultural variance which in turn contributes towards greater social facility when negotiating cross-cultural dissimilarities.

The underlying assumption of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity is that people's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated and in this in turn leads to an increase in competency within intercultural relations. Each stage of this model is indicative of a specific worldview configuration and it's typically accompanying attitudes and behaviours (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). The first three stages encompass ethnocentrism and refer to a worldview where people experience their own culture as central to reality. During the first stage people often experience their culture as the only 'legitimate' culture. This stage is called 'denial' and often people will maintain psychological or physical isolation from different cultures in order to avoid having to develop a consideration for these cultures (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Following denial comes the second stage: defence. During this phase people maintain the legitimacy of their own culture through denigrating cultural differences. This leads to the third ethnocentric stage, minimization. In this phase people minimize the differences between cultures and instead place emphasis on their own cultural worldview as universal and thus all cultures are similar to their own (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). The fourth through to sixth stages of intercultural competency development are ethno-relative and people experience their own culture in the context of other cultures. The fourth stage, called acceptance, involves viewing other cultures as different constructs of knowledge that are equally complex to one's own culture (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). In the following stage of adaptation people develop an ability to shift their perspectives in and out of different cultural views. The sixth and final stage is integration. During this stage people's experience of their 'self' is expanded to include movement in and out of different cultural worldviews (Bennett & Bennett, 2004).

Progressing from ethnocentrism to a more ethnorelative orientation involves overcoming each developmental stage through adapting to, and integrating, cultural differences into one's own worldview. An ethno-relative orientation is achieved when people understand the interrelation of their cultures with other cultures and accept other cultures as equal in complexity and value. Cho, Morris, Slepian, and Tadmor (2017) suggest that the progression from ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism can also be explained as a progression from the colorblind perspective, to the multicultural, and yet further to the polycultural perspective.

3.5. Moving towards polyculturalism

Rosenthal and Levy (2012) found that in most cases the colorblind and assimilation ideologies are endorsed by dominant or advantaged groups. On average people are less likely to endorse the colorblind ideology and tend to lean more towards multicultural and polycultural views. Polyculturalism draws on the final three ethnorelative stages of intercultural sensitivity development through emphasising the interconnectedness of groups and highlighting already existing mutual cultural influence (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012). This diversity ideology highlights that all cultures are a product of historical and contemporary interactions among many different racial and ethnic groups and through our intersecting histories we are all deeply connected to people of other cultures. It assumes that culture is dynamic and ever changing because of its interconnection and influence among other cultures (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012). In contrast to the colorblind and multicultural approach, the polycultural approach does not involve ignoring ones racial or ethnic identity, nor does it involve adopting a dominant culture (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). It also does not require the creation of common goals or interdependency, but it is a diversity ideology that still requires much more research attention (Levy, et al., 2012). Thus far, research has found polyculturalism to be associated with positive intergroup attitudes, greater support for social equality, more positive attitudes towards liberal social policies such as affirmative action, and a greater willingness and comfort with being around people of different backgrounds (Levy, et al., 2012). Bernardo and colleagues (2019) investigated the belief of polyculturalism and its relation to intergroup attitudes in postcolonial Asian societies. More specifically they inquire whether polyculturalism was associated with positive attitudes toward the continuing presence of former colonizers within these societies. Although the researchers did find that the belief in polyculturalism was linked to favourable attitudes towards the continuing presence of colonisers within postcolonial societies. They found that the link between the polyculturalism belief system and positive attitudes towards colonizers only work in societies where people have significant levels of intercultural contact (Bernardo, et al., 2019). But the effect of

polyculturalism beliefs on colonisers' views and attitudes towards those who were colonised is yet to be fully explored. Research on this topic is in its infancy and more in depth studies need to be conducted in order to identify the social advantages and disadvantages of such a perspective in a diverse and cross cultural context such as South Africa.

Furthermore, the differential impact of how people make use of different knowledge has an influence on cultural creativity. "Cultural creativity can be defined as novel solutions that come from mixing ideas from different cultures" (Cho, et al., 2018, p. 4). Drawing from different knowledge systems and implementing different ideas during problem solving has been shown to be consistently associated with greater creativity. The benefit of cultural creativity is dependent on people's willingness to put a range knowledge systems and ideas to use. But, studies have demonstrated generally negative reactions such as, threat or fear of the influence of a different cultures on one's own culture that lead to the exclusion of different interactions and ideas (Cho, et al., 2017).

3.6 Conclusion:

In this chapter, the key tenets of social constructionism were discussed. Social constructionism puts forth that knowledge is socially constructed, and that those constructions are rooted in history and context (Burr, 2018). Social constructionism argues that peoples shared constructions of the world lead to certain patterns of behaviour while excluding others. In this way, peoples shared constructions of the world contribute towards maintaining systems of inequality. This is specifically evident in the fees must fall movement, where students call out exclusionary institutional cultures and institutional racism within South African universities. Another tenet of social constructionism is that knowledge production is politically motivated (Burr, 2018). The influence of politics on education and its further impact on the social structure of society was also briefly covered.

This chapter further included an exploration of the important consequences of socially constructed belief systems, lay theories, or diversity ideologies. Despite the negative consequences of these belief systems, within the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity these belief systems represent the worldviews of specific stages of developing intercultural sensitivity. The ethnocentric stages of this model can be described as ways of avoiding cultural difference through denying its existence, defending against it, or minimizing its importance (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). In turn, the ethnorelative stages represent ways of seeking out cultural difference through accepting its importance, adapting perspectives in support of this, and integrating this newfound understanding into ones

definition of identity (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). Much of these values are reflected in the more recently explored diversity ideology of polyculturalism.

This study does not set out to investigate a diversity ideology, or to interpret data according to the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Instead these things are mentioned in order to show that cultural change, especially in a diverse context such as South Africa, is an extremely complex process and occurs over time in phases. It involves stages of shifting worldviews heavily laden with cognitive dissonance and identity forming. This provides a good foundation from which to approach and understand born free constructions of transformation, and the attitudes and behaviours associated with those constructions. Additionally, this study does not set out to investigate transformation at institutes of higher education. Instead, institutes of higher education act as the context from which participants in this study form their belief systems and shared constructions of transformation. Furthermore, as identified in the literature review. Transformation involves more than just a change of structure and policy. It includes a change in culture, and this chapter highlights the cognitive complexity of such change. It provides a short glimpse of the cognitive hurdles of transformation that institutes of higher education have to overcome.

According to Burr (2018) the aim of a social constructionist enquiry is to study the “emergence of current forms of psychological and social life and to the social practices by which they are created.” (p. 11). That is what this specific study sets out to do. This study does not set out to produce a generalizable result. Instead it sets out to provide an account specific to a group of people within the framework of transformation with the hope of uncovering the emerging psychological and social undercurrents of the born free culture as it pertains to transformation on an individual and wider level. This chapter provides an overview of the theoretical underpinnings a perspectives that help frame the analysis and understanding of the research questions for this study.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter will reiterate the purpose of this study and its research questions before introducing the research design. This study is qualitative in nature, underpinned by the social constructionist perspective and makes use of descriptive relativism as a means of describing the collective reality born frees construct as it relates to transformation. The methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology is described as the methodological approach for this study and was employed through an interpretivist-constructionist perspective. The aim of this approach is to collect rich in depth data about the phenomenon from a small group of specifically selected participants.

A total of 16 students or graduates of higher education from different institutes in South Africa were selected using a snowball sampling method. 6 separate focus group discussions of between 4 and 2 participants were conducted on digital live streaming platforms. The data from these discussions were recorded and described before being thematically analysed. Thematic analysis is a six step process which leads to the identification of the main emerging themes from a data set. An additional technique of the hermeneutic circle was used to link individual pieces of data to the larger themes and data set. Reflexivity was also employed during the analysis and writing up phases as an aid to the interpretation of the data.

Finally, the ethical considerations and efforts towards the credibility, transferability, and dependability of the research findings are also briefly discussed.

4.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the emergence of current forms psychological and social life as it pertains to transformation and born frees students of higher education. It further aims to identify the construction by which these emerging forms of psychological and social life are created through collecting rich and detailed data of born frees shared meanings of transformation. In this way, this study aims to produce a rich body of knowledge that is contextually specific. It may not be

generalizable to other contexts, but it will offer valuable insight into the very complex and understudied phenomenon of transformation as experienced by the born free generation in South Africa.

4.3. Research questions

This study attempts to explore the collective reality of the born free generation in higher education as a means of identifying the attitudes and meanings they hold towards transformation. Furthermore, it attempts to evaluate whether these attitudes reflect the social values set out in the transformation policy for higher education. Additionally, this study explores what born frees identify as barriers and possible solutions to transformation in South Africa. Thus, providing an in depth look at the way in which born-frees, in the context of higher education, give meaning to, and make sense of, transformative concepts and practices.

4.2. Research Design

The proposed study is qualitative in its nature. Qualitative research studies people and groups in their natural settings, with the main aim of understanding the social reality of individuals, groups, and cultures as they live and feel it (Klopper, 2008). Qualitative research involves interacting and communicating with individuals, or groups of participants, as a means of collecting rich and detailed information of these shared meanings and how it pertains to the phenomenon being studied (De Vos, et al., 2011). A social constructionist stance is taken, viewing the perceptions of born-frees as being created through shared meanings and interactions with one another, as well as the wider South African context. This approach places emphasis on communication and dialogue as the foundation for the joint creation of knowledge (Burr, 2015). Knowledge is constructed between people, groups and within society through the use of language and social interaction (Burr, 2015). People gain knowledge through social interaction and their understanding of social reality stems from shared meanings and interactions with others (Burr, 2003). This study explores the shared knowledge between born-free South Africans, and how this knowledge contributes towards understanding the process of transformation in South Africa. Using language and communication, born-frees socially construct their understanding or knowledge of transformation.

Relativism suggests that people each have their own understanding of the world, and so it is impossible for only one, objective, reality to exist (Parker, 1998). Rather, the reality is imperfectly

understood due to the inherently biased understanding that humans have of the world, and their experiences (Parker, 1998). Instead, there exists a collective reality that is shared and communicated through social interaction with others (Parker, 1998). Descriptive relativism provides a means of describing this collective reality (White, 2004), as it takes into consideration that people have very different opinions, and that those opinions should not be judged as right or wrong. Rather, descriptive relativism focuses on creating an understanding of a phenomenon which takes into consideration all the different views expressed. Descriptive relativism (White, 2004) provides a way of identifying and describing the shared understandings born-frees have of transformation without evaluating the validity of these understandings.

A naturalistic and descriptive approach will be used to conduct this study. Naturalistic research collects data from narratives, discourse, and words (Armstrong, 2010). Thus, Language, as the main mode of communication, is used to articulate people's understanding and perceptions of the world (Burr, 2003). Naturalistic research “is an approach to understand the social world in which the researcher observes, describes, and interprets the experiences and actions of specific people and groups in societal and cultural context” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 680). The aim of naturalistic research is not to generalise findings from a representative sample. Rather, this type of research studies a self-identified group or community with the goal of developing “interpretations and local theories that afford deep insights into the human experience” (Armstrong, 2010, p. 680). Descriptive research focuses on providing a rich, in depth description of the phenomenon being studied (McLeod, 2019).

Factors such as context, language, and consciousness of social interaction, all shape the collective understanding of a social group (Burr, 2003). According to Hogg and Smith (2007) attitudes are formed, sustained, and changed through social interaction. They stem from shared meanings and interactions with others, are socially structured, and grounded in group membership (Smith & Hogg, 2008). They are primarily interlinked with the social environment and group membership provides a cognitive foundation whereby social attitudes are learned, changed, and expressed (Smith & Hogg, 2008). In this way, attitudes can act as a representation of the collective reality shared by individuals within a particular context.

This study does not set out to gather specific attitudinal information. It was conducted under the recognition that attitudes differ, and set out to record and represent these different attitudes as holistically as possible. Age plays a significant role in influencing individual attitudes and behaviours and denote two important characteristics: membership to a cohort born during a similar time, and a similar place (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The emic nature of this study is reflected in this studies

focus on the insider account of transformation within the born-free culture. The focus is mainly on collecting rich data from a small group of participants.

As a research methodology hermeneutic phenomenology involves the skill of reading texts and isolating common themes within these texts (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Themes can be seen as representing written interpretations of meaningful lived experience. Once themes have been identified, the researcher has to interpret the meaning of the phenomenon or lived experience underlying these themes. Time and participants relation to the world around them is of importance within this perspective (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Hermeneutic phenomenology involves the collection of data often through human interaction, this data is often analysed as interview transcripts. The analysis involves identifying and interpreting main themes of the data and reporting on the findings of the study. The findings of such studies usually consist of a collection of descriptions of the meanings and lived experience of participants as it relates to the phenomena under study. The focus of hermeneutic phenomenology is on developing an understanding of the meaning of experience by searching for themes and interpretively engaging with the data. There is no real formalised analytical method used in hermeneutic phenomenology, rather researchers allow the context of the phenomenon to dictate how the data should be analysed (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). The interpretivist-constructivist approach to research intends to understand human experience and the context in which it occurs (Schwandt, 1994). Similar to social constructionism this approach suggests that reality is socially constructed. In turn, the interpretivist-constructivist researcher often rely on participants views of the phenomena under study (Schwandt, 1994).

Additionally, just like with hermeneutic phenomenology this approach does not begin with a theory or framework but rather inductively generate and develop themes or patterns of meaning throughout the research process (Schwandt, 1994). In this approach the reflexivity of the researcher can add value and contribute towards interpreting the meanings of the identified themes. Researchers do this through reflectively interpreting the collected data and phenomenon through their own frame of understanding, and not as a separate objective onlooker. The aim of such an approach is to bring phenomena to light and through this process contribute towards knowledge and understanding of the phenomena (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Furthermore, it is a process where researchers use their own relevant lived experience and empathy to analyse and interpret the meaning of collected data. Reflexivity does not act as an explanation for a phenomenon. Rather, it allows for a researcher to describe the phenomenon as it appears in consciousness (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). Hermeneutic phenomenology stresses “the importance and primacy of subjective consciousness, an understanding of consciousness as active - as meaning-bestowing, essential structures to

consciousness of which we gain direct knowledge by a kind of reflection” (Sloan & Bowe, 2014, p. 11) In this regard, reflection is a retrospective activity where participants and researchers look back and try to make meaning of what participants have already experienced or lived through.

The purpose of hermeneutic phenomenology is to bring to light and reflect upon the lived meaning of certain phenomena. This study aims to explore and reflect upon born frees students lived experience and ways of making meaning of transformation. In most cases this methodology involves collecting data from human interaction or text documents recording the phenomena. This informed the decision to collect data for this study over several focus groups where participants could discuss the topic of interest. Focus group discussions were recorded, and transcribed to create a text basis from which to reflect upon and present the results. There is no specific method of analysis within hermeneutic phenomenology.

Rather, researchers often allow their collected data to lead them towards an appropriate method of analysis. This approach often involves identifying main themes, or defining themes within the data set from which a researcher is able to reflect the findings of their study. The method of thematic analysis aids this process, allowing the researcher to identify and describe the main themes within a collected data set. Specific to this study, the hermeneutic circle is also employed to more effectively reflect the identified themes. This process involves ensuring that the identified themes represent not only individually collected items of data, but reflects the overall collected data as well.

4.4 Data collection:

4.4.1 Research context

This study takes place during the Covid-19 pandemic. We saw a world wide shut down and were forced to adapt to online learning methods. The pandemic also forced me to adapt my study to include online methods of data collection as campuses were closed, and we had strict instructions to not have any social/group gatherings. Ultimately, using online methods came with their own difficulties and problems. Many potential participants did not have the means to participate online, those who were able to participate often were not able to suggest potential participants from the same university or who were specifically South African. Some participants, due to the repercussions of Covid-19 were forced to put a hold on their studies or take sabbaticals from their degrees. Other participants were fortunate enough to have graduated and received their degrees despite the pandemic.

This study takes place in the context of higher education. Higher education plays a very important role in the transformation agenda. Higher education is intrinsically significant as it provides the

foundation on which dedicated academics and students engage around humanities intellectual, scientific, and cultural inheritances within historical and contemporary understandings that shape the beliefs and views of our collective social goals as a society (Badat, 2010). The context for this study was focused on institutes of higher education, specifically universities. The reason for this is because the context of higher education in South Africa has undergone significant structural transformation in their policies, regulations, demographics, and curriculum since the end of apartheid. This provides a rich context in which to study born free experiences and understandings of transformation. Additionally, Burr (2018) and Levy, et al (2012) highlight that context plays a significant role in peoples belief systems and how they end up making meaning of the world around them. This study does not intent to produce generalizable results. Instead, the objective is to provide a glimpse into the perspectives and constructions of a specific group within the born free generation. Furthermore, many formerly white institutions of higher education have acknowledged their roles in the production and maintenance of systems of colonialism and apartheid. A historically white institute in Gauteng expresses a deep desire to move towards a just and equitable future through engaging in academic endeavours that are, in service of public good, actualise human potential, visible in curricula, and that underpinned by the constitution of South Africa (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016).

To achieve this the university undertook the task of transforming its curriculum into one that recognises and accommodates local and global contexts as well as, histories, realities and problems. It put forth four drives of curriculum transformation: responsiveness to social context, epistemological diversity, renewal of pedagogy and classroom practices, and an institutional culture of openness and critical reflection (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016). These transformative efforts embrace the policy goals set out by Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, and act as an example of how South African universities have approached transformation within their own institutions within the democratic regime. Furthermore, transformational success is dependent on how well institutions value, engage, and include stakeholders, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds in institutional initiatives and plans

Universities have embraced transformation as a “strategic driver for ensuring success in teaching, learning and research, a means for attracting historically disadvantaged communities, and a catalyst for creating the conditions in which all members of the university can thrive” (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016, p. 3). Transformation is approached an overarching institutional imperative that requires fundamental changes in university cultures whereby diversity, inclusion and equity, are imbedded in every effort, aspect, and level of the university. The goal is to make

transformation a norm that is practiced by all stakeholders, staff and students within the university context. (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment & IT, 2016, p. 3).

Additionally, Brynard (2007) and Sooklal (2006) identify that institutes of higher education in South Africa are experiencing a huge gap in transformation policy outcomes. This is evidenced by the fees must fall movement, which experienced a resurgence in 2021. The fees must fall movement is not limited to the born free generation, but largely represents the born free generations first big protest and call for social action in post-apartheid South Africa. Through calling out institutional racism, leaders of the fees must fall movement confirm that transformation as it is envisioned in policy has not been achieved in the institutional cultures of universities (Pandor, 2018). In this way, the university context offers the perfect foundation from which to study transformation and the born free generation.

4.4.2 Sampling:

A purposive sampling method was used to select a sample for this study. To illuminate potential group differences and similarities samples must be selected purposively in accordance with the research questions (Joffe, 2012). The sample characteristics for this study included being born on or between the years of 1994 to 2000, in South Africa, and being a student of higher education. Limiting the study to the year 2000 was beneficial as it narrowed down the sample population, as well as minimising any ethical difficulties that may have come from working with minors (Willig, 2013). Context and mode of communication are important factors contributing to one's understanding and perception of the world (Nowell, et al., 2017). Because of this the sample group for this study was limited to born frees who were students or graduates of higher education. In this way, participants would share contextual similarities. Although universities may have transformation policies specific to their institutions, all institutes of higher education in South Africa are regulated by the same constitutional laws and transformation policy objectives. The benefit of this is that the results from this study are not limited to a single university but may provide insight that is more generalizable to the born free cohort within the context of higher education.

Advertisements were placed on various student specific online platforms, including online media platforms and university affiliated online platforms, including university groups on Facebook. Respondents were given an information letter (see Appendix B) explaining the aims, purposes and requirements of participation for this study. The inclusion criteria for this study is that participants

must be South Africans, born in between 1994 and 2000, and students or graduates of higher education.

Naturalistic research aims to study “bona fide groups” characterised by stable, permeable boundaries that are interdependent of their context (Putnam & Stohl, 1990). This type of research attempts to “reconstruct the ‘world’ at the only point at which it exists: in the minds of constructors” (Guba, 1990. 27). In order to identify bona fide groups the non-probability method of snowball sampling was used. Participants were asked to each refer other potential participants who met the requirements of the study and whom they would have participate in the focus group with them. Initially these referrals were received over e-mail, but due to lack of responses I switched over to creating WhatsApp groups for better communications.

After answering any additional questions and inquires, participants were asked to give their informed consent before proceeding with the focus group interviews. Each focus group consisted of participants who were acquainted with one another. Many of these friendships or relationships started at university, with a few participants having relationships that extended back to their childhoods.

4.4.3 Selection of participants:

All participants for this study were born free South Africans. They were born between the years of 1994 and 2000 and were in various stages of higher education ranging from undergraduate degrees, to master degrees. Some participants were doing their practical and final years and some have since graduated and started their internship years. All participants grew up in the South African education system, and attended a South African institute of higher education. Participants were similar in that they all attended university during the FeesMustFall protests. Participants were all also engaging in online learning as campuses were closed due to the Covid-19 shutdown. Although many of the final participants were referred participants, due to the Covid-19 lockdown participants had not been in much contact with one another outside of academic related activities. All in all there were 16 participants, 5 separate focus groups and 1, one-on-one interview. The size and number of focus groups have been chosen to reduce the occurrence of skewed data by having too little groups, as well as to prevent the researcher being overwhelmed by too many participants in a single group (Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Although it was not the initial intent to conduct any one-on-one interviews only one participant attended the final focus group study. I thought it prudent to allow the participant an opportunity to contribute, and not just turn them away. The data collected from

this interview did not introduce any new information but rather indicated that the collection phase had reached saturation.

Table 1

Summary of Participant Information

Focus Groups:	Pseudonyms:	Descriptions:
Group 1	Hano	25 year old white, Afrikaans male from the Western Cape Province. Speaks primarily English in social settings and at home. Recently graduated from an LLB law degree at the University of Stellenbosch and is currently in the beginnings of his internship as a candidate attorney.
	Tumo	24 year old, English speaking white male from Mpumalanga Graduating with a BCom LLB degree from the University of Stellenbosch and entering into the paralegal field in Cape Town.
	Annelie	25 year old, white female. She is Afrikaans and from Gauteng . Recently graduated from a BCom LLB degree at the University of Stellenbosch and moving forward to becoming a candidate attorney at a company.
	David	24 year old white, Afrikaans male from Gauteng. Studies BEng industrial engineering at the University of Stellenbosch and has goals of working as an industrial engineer in Johannesburg.
Group 2	Tinus	22 year old white Afrikaans male, studying information technology at the University of Free State in the Free State . He is also a MCSD Microsoft certified programmer and is starting his own business.
	Amanda	22 year old Afrikaans female from the Eastern Cape. She is studying BSocSci Nursing at the University of Free State and is currently in her nursing practical years at a public hospital in Bloemfontein.
	Magda	24 year old white, Afrikaans female currently in her 4 th year of a

		BSocSci degree in nursing at the University of the Free State but started her degree at the University of Pretoria.
Group 3	Liana	24 year old white, Afrikaans female from the province of Kwazulu Natal and currently residing in Cape Town. She has an undergraduate and honours degree in forensic accounting from North West University in Potchefstroom. She is currently in the final year of an honours in chartered accounting which amounts to six years of study in total.
	Eben	23 year old white, Afrikaans male originally from Bloemfontein and currently residing in the Western Cape. He has completed a BEng Industrial Engineering degree, as well as a MEng in Development and Management Engineering at the North West University. Currently he is working as a consultant in the field of industrial engineering.
	Keanu	25 year old, white, English speaking male from the Western Cape. He started a degree in film, television and directing in 2016. Due to the repercussions of Covid-19 he is currently home and self-employed.
	Keagan	24 year old white, English speaking female from Gauteng. She has completed qualifications in graphic design, animation and special effects as well as prosthetics. She is currently working as a pet sitter in Cape Town.
Group 4	Tatiana	25 year old black female from Gauteng. She is from a Zulu and Pedi background and speaks isiZulu and English at home. She did her undergraduate and honours degrees in psychology at the University of Pretoria. Currently she is in her 2 nd year of a clinical psychology master's degree as a clinical intern in Grahamstown.
	Katana	24 year old black female. Studied her undergraduate and honours degrees in Psychology (BSocSci Honours) at the university of Pretoria. Applied and gained entrance for a masters in Psychology but since then has had to take a break due to economic and Covid-19 related factors. She is currently working in Qatar as an HR co-

		ordinator and is preparing to continue her psychology master's degree as soon as possible.
Group 5	Thendo	27 year old black male from Limpopo. He is Vhavenda, speaks English and Tshivenda studied LLB law at the University of Venda. He is working towards becoming a compliance officer.
	Nduvho	25 year old black female, she is English and Tshivenda speaking and from Limpopo. She is currently finalising her Bachelor of Nursing Science at the University of Venda with plans to become a professional nurse.
Group 6 (single interview)	Phathu	27 year old black male from Limpopo. He is currently studying his LLB law degree at the University of Venda. He is multilingual, predominantly speaking Tshivenda and English.

4.4.4 Digital Focus Groups:

To collect data the method of digital focus groups was used. Conducting a focus group study is most beneficial for the collection of in-depth information regarding the topic of interest, as a focus group aims to make use of the participant's feelings, perceptions, and opinions as they are expressed within the group (Klopper, 2008). Synchronous online focus groups are very similar to offline focus groups in that they are real-time, and moderators are easily able to direct the flow of conversation and encourage participants to build on each-others comments (Stewart & Williams, 2005). Research of online focus group studies have found that an online platform may encourage participants to speak more freely, without feeling hampered by distraction or peer pressure that may result from being in a physical focus group study (Stewart & Williams, 2005). The medium of the internet allows for easier access to potential participants. In an online focus group, participants are not required to meet at a central location, rather the focus group is conducted on an online platform allowing for participants to access from any location provided they have the necessary facilities (Stewart & Williams, 2005). Due to the Covid-19 shutdown, an online method of data collection was most appropriate for this study. This method allowed for a quicker procession of the data collection process as it reduced the amount of time needed to spend on finding participants, securing a location to conduct the focus group, as well as finding a time where all participants would be available to partake in focus group discussions.

Online focus groups are usually conducted using livestreaming video platforms or instant messaging boards (Stewart & Williams, 2005). For this study the livestreaming platforms of Zoom and Microsoft Meetings were used to conduct and record the focus group discussions. An open-ended focus group guide (See appendix A) was used to centre discussions on how participants perceive and make meaning of concepts such as; the ‘born-free’ generation and transformation. To ensure that the collected data was relevant to this study, the focus group questions were formed to illicit information that reflect the three elements of attitudes and identified by Breckler (1984); affect, cognition, and behaviour. The questions were shaped in such a way that they allowed, and encouraged, participants to share their preferences, beliefs, and actual experiences. This type of data supports the objective of reflexivity underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology. Similarly, the aim for these discussions was to draw out information to better understand the circumstances, behaviours, and opinions that shape born free attitudes and beliefs towards these topics.

Each focus group started off with an introduction from the information letter, and a reminder of the voluntary nature of the study and the fact that participant’s information will be kept completely private. Participants were reminded that our discussions would be recorded and transcribed for data analysis. This was easily achieved with the recording function on both online platforms. Before starting the discussion, participants were relayed a few rules to help the flow of the focus group discussion. Participants were asked to mute their microphones to remove any unnecessary background noise, and to unmute their microphone when they were taking a turn to speak. Participants were also asked to take a moment to indicate that they are going to reply so that the group avoids speaking over one another. They were also asked to try and answer each question fully, even if they agree with what has been said, anything they may be able to add is valuable to the study. Participants were all asked to verbally confirm that they understood and were willing to continue with the study before the first questions were asked.

5 separate focus group discussions of between 4 and 2 participants and one, one-on-one interview was conducted for this study. As the researcher, I saw my role in these focus group discussions as a facilitator leading the conversation to the desired topic, not introducing my own content into the discussions, and asking follow up questions to expand on what participants were saying. These different discussions ranged from 40 minutes to 2 hours depending on the size of the group.

As the researcher and interviewee, it was my role to introduce the topic of interest and occasionally guide participant conversations to expand or clarify what was said. Furthermore, it was my role to

provide a safe, encouraging and open environment where participants felt comfortable to speak their mind without fear of judgement or retribution. This was particularly important because the topic of transformation is particularly complex and touches on many sensitive topics which participants may be uninclined to talk about in an environment where they feel judged or criticised for speaking their mind or being who they are. Additionally, such an open environment has the potential to lead to valuable data that highlights the subtle nuances of born free beliefs, attitudes, understanding, and experiences of transformation in post-apartheid South Africa.

4.4.5 Transcription:

Each focus group discussion was video and audio recorded. These recorded conversations were then transcribed into written word for further analysis. Transcriptions were organised according to the main questions in the interview guide, and participants were all given pseudonyms.

4.5 Data analysis:

4.5.1 Thematic analysis:

Thematic analysis is a method for “systematically identifying, organising, and offering into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). This method allows the researcher to discern and make sense of collective and shared meanings and experiences through identifying the common ways in which participants talk about and therefore make sense of a phenomenon (Terry, et al., 2017). In this way, thematic analysis “facilitates the gleaning of knowledge of the meaning made of the phenomenon under study by the groups studied and provides the necessary groundwork for establishing valid models of human thinking, feeling and behaviour” (Joffe, 2012 p. 210).

Thematic content analysis is a foundational qualitative analytic procedure and to a degree informs all qualitative methods (Joffe, 2012). It is a flexible method of analysis and the data in a thematic analysis usually consists of a set of texts, such as the focus group transcripts from this study (Caulfield, 2020). The researcher identifies common themes that emerge from the collected data and use these themes to describe the commonalities in thinking and being among the different participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The results of a thematic content analysis should highlight the affective, cognitive and symbolic dimensions of the data set (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). There are various approaches to conducting a thematic analysis and because of this it can be adapted to many different kinds of research (Joffe, 2012). The most common approach is a six-step process

originally developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006) for psychology research. The six-step process includes; Familiarization, Coding, Generating themes, Reviewing themes, Defining and naming themes, Writing up.

3.5.1.1 Familiarization:

The initial step of this method involves getting a thorough overview of the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). What helped a lot in the familiarization process was that I transcribed each focus group discussion myself. Once transcribed, I re-read through each discussion and added in the notes I made by hand during the discussions.

3.5.1.2 Coding:

This phase involves generating succinct codes that identify important features of the data relevant to answering the research question. Codes allow the researcher to get a condensed overview of the main points and common meanings that recur in the data (Caulfield, 2020). Codes are generated throughout the entire data set and collated with relevant data extracts for further analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I used an inductive approach to generating codes from my data sets. Many of the codes I generated reflected the words used by participants. In turn each code word was associated with a specific colour, and the related text was highlighted in a matching colour.

3.5.1.3 Generating initial themes:

Themes are specific patterns of explicit and implicit content and meaning that can be found in the data (Caulfield, 2020). Themes are broader than codes and often involves grouping several like codes together. To demarcate themes to the data from the focus group transcripts, I used a dual deductive-inductive method of analysis (Joffe, 2012). An inductive approach to thematic analysis involves allowing the data to generate its own themes. A deductive approach involves using preconceived themes generated from theory or existing knowledge. My analysis was inductive in that I allowed for the data set to provide the main themes in my findings, but it is deductive in that my analysis of these themes include preconceived notions from existing knowledge as mentioned in my literature review. I also used both a semantic and latent approach in my analysis, exploring not only participant's stated opinions. But, also exploring what their statements reveal about their assumptions and social context (Caulfield, 2020).

3.5.1.4 Reviewing themes:

This step involves reviewing the data and checking that the selected themes accurately represent the data. This phase often also involves a reorganisation of themes, either splitting or combining themes to make them more useful and accurate. The themes identified within the data for this study were

interconnected and it took some time to organise them coherently. At first the themes were organised according to the interview questions. But, as I became more familiar with the data I started organising the themes according to the main concepts discussed.

3.5.1.5 Defining and naming themes:

Defining and naming themes involves giving a succinct and understandable name for each theme, defining the meaning of each theme as well as identifying how it contributes towards understanding the data (Caulfield, 2020). In this regard I drew from the quotations of each section as a means of naming and describing each theme and sub theme. Initially the themes were generated under each interview question, but after reviewing the themes they were renamed as participant descriptions and answers to the original interview questions. In this way each theme captures the essence of participant's discussions.

3.5.1.5 Data analysis and writing up:

The final step involves writing up the analysis and interpretation of the data and themes. To achieve this I made use of the hermeneutic circle technique. This is a process whereby the researcher moves from analysing and interpreting individual parts of the document as then linking those individual parts to an interpretation and analysis of the larger body of data (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). In this regard I attempted to create a narrative between quotations and link those to the larger themes previously identified. Because the themes were interconnected I also created a diagram to better show the complex and interconnected nature of the discussed themes.

4.5.2 Analytical process

In order to ensure the credibility and dependability of this study different methods of triangulation were used. There was a triangulation of sources or participants for this study in that 6 separate focus group discussions were conducted. All focus groups were conducted using the same method and questions, but the composition of each group was not completely consistent. Each focus group was different from the others and represented diverse individuals. This diversity ranged in culture, language, race, direction of study, place of living, and institutional locations. Further theoretical triangulation was used during the analysis and findings chapter. Multiple theoretical perspectives such as social constructionism, diversity ideologies, cognitive dissonance, and reculturing were used to analyse the data of this study. Additionally the transferability of this study is evidenced in a thick description of the context, behaviour and experiences of the born free generation which brings meaningful insight to the reader.

4.5.3 Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to a process through which the researcher is self-reflective and conscious of the ways in which they may impact the collected data and the type of knowledge produced in their study (Sloan & Bowe, 2014). In this regard the phenomenon under study was very close to me as a researcher as I am also a born free within the sphere of higher education. I have been born, raised and educated within the transformed democratic system. I was also present for the fees must fall protests of 2015 and 2016 during my university experience.

As a white, middle-class Afrikaans female I belong to a group of South Africans who throughout the colonial and apartheid history of South Africa have been advantaged legally, economically, socially, politically, and in education. As identified in my literature review, in the process of developing intercultural sensitivity those who belong to advantaged groups are more likely to endorse diversity beliefs and intergroup practices that reduce overt discrimination while still maintaining covert psychological and structural discrimination (Rosenthal and Levy, 2012). This is particularly highlighted in the criticisms of the colorblind and multicultural diversity ideologies. As I am still in the process of traversing through the developmental stages of intercultural sensitivity, these factors may have an impact on the way in which I view and interpret the collected data.

My ideology or worldview of diversity, intercultural relations, race, transformation and my place within it all is constantly growing and changing. In this regard, I am only able to provide an analysis and view of the data that is limited by my consciousness, understanding, and constructions of the world. I believe that my position as a white Afrikaaner with the added benefit of a brief and diverse international schooling experience may give me a unique but not perfect perspective. I spent some years living in Saudi Arabia in a multinational school where I had the added benefit of an international multicultural educative context. I believe this experience has greatly contributed towards expanding my views to extend beyond the colorblind, and multicultural ideologies, towards something more polyculturalist in structure. I am still engaging with this process, and trying to work through the cognitive dissonance accompanying it.

According to Suddick, et al. (2020):

hermeneutic phenomenology means working with part and whole in a cyclical, open and interrogative way to understand the person/ people who produced the text, the person doing the hermeneutic phenomenological work, and ultimately, the phenomenon that is brought to awareness and made manifest as a result of the work (p. 12).

In this way, the researcher becomes the tool for data analysis. I tried to keep this in mind as I conducted this study. During the different focus group studies I tried to remain aware of my role as facilitator and to only participate in discussions as much as was needed to keep the conversations going. I pre-emptively settled on a few main questions or topics for discussion with which I could steer the conversation. It served as my strategy for staying on topic and the basis from which I launched my interrogation of the phenomenon. I also attempted to create an open and “judgement free” atmosphere for participants as a means of encouraging them to speak freely. These efforts were reinforced by the fact that the focus groups consisted mostly out of people who knew one another from university. I tried to allow the discussion to evolve naturally instead of providing a ridged structure that each group needed to fulfil. I ensured each participant took part in the discussions and provided their views on the given topic. I would circle back to my main topics and questions if I felt the discussion was going off topic, or if I felt that the topic had not been adequately explored. I kept record of my thoughts during each discussion and circled back to them once each participant had a chance to speak. Additionally, I ended each session by asking participants to reflect back on the discussion they had and to shortly summarise their thoughts on the topics discussed.

At first, I was worried that this approach was too broad as I could not discern much similarity between the different focus groups, but as I collected more data the main points raised in each group started to flesh out and coalesce. During the analysis process of analysis, I employed a similar circular process. I first went through each transcription individually highlighting the main points raised in each focus group discussion. I then went through the data set as a whole, identifying where the main points of discussion from individual sets of data intersect and touch on the same points. I sorted these intersecting points of data into main themes. I then attempted to show how each theme contributes towards painting a bigger picture of the born free experience. I attempted to relay not only what participants were literally saying, but to interpret the things they were trying to express in a way that was relevant to, and representative of their collective voice.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations for this research study as awarded by the University of Pretoria (HUM014/1119) include issues of informed consent, confidentiality, and non-maleficence (Willig, 2013). Through the use of a participant information letter, informing participants of the voluntary nature of their participation, the protection of their contributed data, and finally the availability of

professional counselling services should it be required. Informed consent refers to the process of briefing participants about the research project. This includes informing participants about the aim and purpose of the research, the potential uses of the research, as well as potential implications of partaking in the research (Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The process of gaining informed consent also acts as a means of establishing a good rapport with potential participants. This increases the probability of participants providing open and honest answers during the research process (Leedy, 2014).

The Council of American Survey Research Organisations social media guidelines (2011) suggest that where participants and researchers directly interact, informed consent must be obtained (Sugiura, et al., 2017). This is reiterated by The British Psychological Society, which puts forth that wherever possible, including in the conduction of online research, investigators should inform all participants of the objectives of the research as well as any aspects of the research which may influence the participant's willingness to partake in the study (Rodham & Gavin, 2006). This study plans to present participants with the participant information letter and informed consent form through directly contacting them via e-mail.

Furthermore researchers should ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of their participants, as well as provide feedback (debriefing) to participants after the study has been conducted. In order to achieve anonymity and confidentiality all data that may serve to identify participants will be removed from the data before publication (Sugiura, et al., 2017). Participant's contribution to the research should not be identifiable by the researcher nor by any other person who may gain access to the research. Confidentiality can be maintained by assigning each participant with a pseudonym (Willig, 2013). But, this does not cater for instances where a participant may be recognized by their voice in the audio recordings. To combat the issue of voice recognition, the confidentiality of the participants' data should be strictly enforced and voice recordings should be transcribed. In the transcribed documents, participants will be given pseudonyms to represent their contributed data, adding an extra layer of participant confidentiality to the study (Willig, 2013).

Data collected using online methods may be limited as some passive methods of online data collection do not allow the researcher to ask follow up questions (Roberts, 2015). More active forms of online data collection using traditional methods such as interviews, allows the researcher to ask follow up questions, but these methods often do not give researchers control over the research setting. Furthermore, research participants can more easily disengage from online participation, or disrupt the data collection process, especially in online interviews and text- based interviews may be time-consuming and produce shallow, ambiguous data for analysis. Roberts (2015) points out that that these potential downfalls may be minimised by the use of audio and video recordings.

Further issues which may arise from the use of online methods for data collection include unwanted contributions from internet users who are not signed up to participate in the research, as well as non-participants having access to the questions and responses posted during focus group discussions. These issues can be avoided by setting up a closed on-line focus groups where only selected participants have access (Rodham & Gavin, 2006). This study will make use of online video/ audio streaming services such as Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) which allows for closed online groups to be conducted. Without receiving a link from the researcher, no one will be able to participate in the focus group discussion but those selected for participation. Each focus group will receive their own invites and links, thus they will not be able to participate in any subsequent online focus groups for the study.

4.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to provide a rich description of the born free lived experience of transformation and how they make sense of and understand transformative concepts and practices within the context of higher education. As identified and discussed in the previous chapters, transformation at institutes of higher education has not been perfect. Instead, universities have to deal with a wide variety of transformational barriers including the need for, and lack of social reform. This is evidenced by the fees must fall movement's call to end institutionalised racism. By exploring the constructions of born frees within the context of higher education, there is much potential to develop a greater understanding of the issues of transformation, specifically cultural transformation, at these institutions.

In order to answer the research questions this study proposed a qualitative approach underpinned by tenets of social constructionism and descriptive relativism. The methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology was employed. There is no formal analytical approach within this methodology, instead the context of the phenomenon and the content of the data dictate the analysis process (Sloane & Bowe, 2014). This is further supported by an interpretivist-constructivist approach to data analysis which relies on participant's views of phenomena under study in order to interpret its meaning (Schwandt, 1994). Reflexivity is pivotal to this process and requires the researcher to reflectively interpret the data taking into consideration their own influences on the interpretation process, but also the additional influences that may impact participant's views (Sloan & Bowe, 2014).

Data was collected within the context of higher education. The context of higher education, as abiding by transformation laws and policies, having a policy gap in terms of the outcomes of these transformative efforts, and having that gap confirmed by the fees must fall movement and its recent

resurgence, provides the perfect research context for this study. Advertisements were used to recruit participants and focus groups were created through the process of snowball sampling. Having group members acquainted with one another increased the likelihood that they represented a bona fide group. Participants were selected based on their age (21 to 27 years), South African nationality, and attendance to a higher institute of education in South Africa. 16 participants were divided into 6 different groups. The method of digital focus groups over live streaming platforms was used to conduct and record the various discussions.

Each individual focus group discussion was transcribed and the method of thematic analysis was used to organise and analyse the collected data. This involved a six step process of familiarization, coding, initial theme generation, reviewing of themes, defining and naming themes, and the final stage is writing up your analysis. Within the writing up phase the hermeneutic circle was used as a method of linking smaller individual quotations of data, with the larger thematic points of the entire data set. It also involved the use of reflexivity, taking into consideration not only the way my thinking and being as a researcher can impact the study. But, also considering the context and perspectives from which participants approach the phenomenon under study and how that may impact their perspectives and attitudes. Further considerations of theoretical and source triangulation, as well as informed consent forms and pseudonyms, were made to ensure the credibility, dependability, transferability and ethical diligence of this study.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the collected data is presented in the following chapter. Following is a table that offers a brief summary of the main points of discussion within this chapter. The content of this chapter offers a thematic analysis of born free constructions of transformation and how it contributes towards the attitudes they have towards the objective of transformation in South Africa. The following chapter will present the findings and discussions collected from the data. The following table offers a brief overview of the topics for discussion explored in the chapter.

Table 2:

Main Points of Discussion

Section:	Brief Description
5.1 The born free generation:	Who are they, what is their lived

	experience, and how do they view transformation.
5.2 The transformation ideal	Transformation within the born free generation has been constructed as an ideal unrepresentative of the South African reality.
5.3 The current state of transformation	What are born free experiences of transformation in the current South African context and what do they identify as the barriers and potential solutions to transformation.
5.4 The need for cultural transformation	The lack of personal and cultural transformation in South Africa is discussed as a major barrier to transformation
5.5 Born frees in higher education:	Born free experienced and expectations of transformation in higher education, and the impact of these experiences on their identity.
5.6 The transformative responsibilities of the born free generation:	The adoption of transformation as a generational goal but also through personal agency. Including the role and attitudes of the born free generation in the transformation process.
5.7 born free attitudes towards transformation	How born frees feel about transformation as its achievability in South Africa.

5.1 Born frees: The generation that was birthed outside of the influence of apartheid.”

The participants in this study, all being of the born free generation were requested to partake in a discussion exploring their understanding of what it means to be a born free. Mostly born frees referred to the historical significance of the generation. Being born free was associated with being born and raised after apartheid, and therefore free of the oppression and discrimination of that

regime. Keanu refers to born frees as growing up with “no knowledge” or experience of the apartheid regime and that they are essentially free or “outside of the influence of apartheid”.

Keanu: So to my complete understanding it is essentially the generation that was birthed outside of the influence of apartheid. So, essentially growing up with no knowledge of what probably took place during apartheid.

Additionally, Nduvho states since she was “born after apartheid” she has been “born free” of apartheid. She states that without “apartheid, and the racism” “blocking” them, the born free generation are “free to do anything [they] want” or “need to achieve”. Born frees are now “treated equally” in comparison to how her parents and grandparents were treated during apartheid.

Nduvho: I have been born free since I am born after apartheid. So it means that I am now free. I am now treated equally to you know maybe our parents and grandparents were treated. Because you know, of apartheid, and the racism, and all the stuff. You know they were not allowed to enter certain premises but we are allowed to do such a thing. We are free to do anything that we want. We’ve got our own say, we can do whatever that we need to achieve without blocking us, so we are free.

Born frees define being a born free as having the privilege of greater choice, access, and equality than the generations before them. The new South African Constitution and its underlying values of equality in the form of equal rights, lack of discrimination, equal access and opportunity, were all described as forming part of what it meant to be born free. Phathu states that being a born free is a “privilege” because of the “rights” and protection the constitution of South Africa offers us.

Thendo: What it means to me to be a born free. Basically, I can say okay, because obviously we’ve heard about apartheid era and how difficult it was to live in that era ...Being a born free it’s a privilege because now we have a lot of rights, there is a new constitution that protects us. We are able to access education equally.

He further explains born frees are a generation born after apartheid when “South Africa was transforming to a democratic country” where everyone has “equal rights” and there is no “discrimination” between races. Phathu mentions that black people no longer need to fear “any sort of prosecution or repercussions” from racialized laws and practices.

Phathu: What does it mean to be a born free? Uh to be a born free is, particularly the way I understand it, and what I take it as, is that being born in 1994 or after that where in the regime of apartheid was just coming to an end and South Africa was transforming to a democratic country where people had, I could say I suppose, equal rights. They can do whatever, and

there wasn't any discrimination anymore. To be a born free, I feel like, was to be a child who was born with options of what they can do, where they can go, and what they can say, and at what time. Without the fear of any sort of prosecution or repercussions. Uh, and all that because of the change that happened in 1994.

Born frees describe that because of the transformation from apartheid to democracy as the born frees now have the freedom to choose their path in life, and have access to achieving these choices because of the laws and policies that stem from the new South African constitution. This is reflected by Phathu who says being a born free means being "born with options" and further supported by the following quotation where Katana refers to being born free as being "all about having the choice".

Katana: I'd say for me like it was something like, I feel like it was all about a concept that was kind of like all about having the choice, you know. Being born into a generation where you have choice in comparison to previous generations, our parents and so on. Um, being black or you know being from um...basically you are born into a society where you have more choice. I think that's the idea behind being a born free. Born free of like apartheid, our past, everything...racism, being born into that type of a situation. So, that's like how it makes sense to me.

Both Liana and Nduvho touch on the concept of born frees having greater and unrestricted choice with regards to "who you want to be" and "what you want to become" in post-apartheid South Africa. Nduvho offers an example of having greater career choices than previous generations. All in all, born frees share the opinion that being born free means having greater "choice" in, and "opportunities" for reaching their "potential" than previous generations.

Liana: For me it's basically to be born and to have a choice on who you want to be in the future, and to have a way of making that choice a reality and not be restricted by law or by other people, but to actually have the choice to reach your potential. You know, and then you can choose to use opportunities around you. Those opportunities are not restricted. So that's for me to be free, and to choose who you want to be and who you want to become.

Nduvho: So we can pick and choose which direction to go. Back then, from what our parents told us, they said even the career choices was in a certain basket.

For many, being born free means being free to choose who you associate with, where you go, and what you do with your life. It means having more opportunities, especially in education, and a greater potential to be successful in comparison to their parents and grandparents generations. Katana refers to born freeism as breaking free from apartheid by moving across racial and cultural boundaries and moving away from old accepted ways of being. Katana expresses the significance of greater choice,

freedom, and opportunity “to go to school” and get a “higher education” for her as a black woman in the “new” South Africa

Katana: I’d agree with what Tatiana said because I also had access to some of the privilege, that like, comes with being a born free. Like going to school, going to higher education, um having certain experiences ... and being in the middle class you kind of have access to this born free life, you have access ... It’s that type of, or being able to have the choice, or even being able to be associated with friends that were able to do certain things that like, or study certain things, or even pursue certain careers that back in the day it would kind of be taboo if you would tell your mom and dad “okay I’m going to um study film.” You know um, being able to associate, or be in the same group of people like that, I feel like I’ve been, in the generational experience been a born free, because I’ve been given, been around people that have been given choice, I have also been given choice to a certain degree.

Receiving an education and access to higher education is fundamental to the ideal of born-freeism and is prominent in descriptions of what it means to be a born free. In this regard, Katana refers to born-freeism as a “privilege” which echoes Phathu who also describes being born free as a privilege because born frees are able to “access education equally”.

Born frees define their generation as one born after the fall of apartheid and therefore free of apartheid and its influence. They identify how being a born free means having greater access, opportunity and therefore potential to succeed in South Africa. Specifically born frees mention equality, and access to higher education as some of the main privileges that come with being part of the born free generation. They further highlight that the new constitution of South Africa is integral to the born free experience as it provides the foundation from which born frees are able to have access, choice, lack of discrimination and opportunity they have in comparison to their parents’ generation.

5.1.1 A multicultural experience: The generation that “lived integration”.

Most born frees’ lived experience is one of integration and equality amongst the races and cultures within South Africa. Tatiana describes born frees as the first generation of South Africans who “lived integration”. She further points out that part of being a born free is having grown up in an integrated school setting where you are surrounded by “different kinds of people” and everyone is counted as “equals”.

Tatiana: I think maybe because we were the first generation who could genuinely, everyone else had to kind of hope for or wait and see what was going to happen with integration. And I think we were kind of that generation that lived integration from the second you were born

until now. Where you've just always grown up with like different kind of people around you and you guys count as equals.

The notion of equality resonates strongly with participant descriptions of the born free lived experience. It extends to include equal treatment of the self and others as can be seen in Nduvho's comment, "we treat each other equally". She recounts that in her childhood experience she was not aware of any discrimination towards her based on her skin colour or language.

Nduvho: I can say ever since I was a child growing up, I cannot say I once came across a situation where I was discriminated because of my colour or because of the language I speak. I've been treated like equally like everyone else. I even have white friends at work. We treat each other equally like the skin colour doesn't matter anymore we are the same we are one nation.

Katana offers an expansion on what having "lived integration" is like, describing a school experience characterised by a blending of culture and language where people "just enmesh with each other". For many, the born free lived experience of childhood was comprised of a multicultural school experience, and a shared freedom from the awareness of apartheid and racial discrimination as a child.

Katana: My school was too blended for us to be ... as in I mean you find someone who's white and they would speak in your dialect, speak your language. Things like that, they would just * makes had cupping gesture* enmesh with each other.

Born frees point out that in childhood they were unaware and had no knowledge of the apartheid past. Keanu explains that this lack of awareness or "understanding" in combination with "lived integration" through a multicultural school experience allowed born frees to participate and enjoy "the true beginning" of a "fresh" "new South Africa".

Keanu: In regards to how I feel, personally as a born free, cuz you know when I was growing up I didn't have an understanding in terms of there was a history based off the pigment of your skin and cultural belonging. So I was absolutely blessed and was free of that. ...for example and there was never a time where I felt like you had a history and I need to be aware of that and act differently. So to me it was simply the true beginning, fresh, fresh, fresh, uh, feeling of the new South Africa.

Born frees express that the multicultural school context, and a lack of understanding of the apartheid past during childhood contributed towards a lived experience where born frees were able to build, and have more diverse and equal relationships across races and cultures in comparison to prior generations. Having grown up without an "understanding" or "knowledge" of apartheid contributed

towards a childhood experience that was free of the issues that come with the awareness of our apartheid history. In this regards, Keanu offers the example of having to act differently because of this awareness. As a child his social world was not divided along the same racial lines as apartheid, and because of that he was able to interact with diverse groups of South Africans without being influenced by the divisions of the apartheid past. Additionally, born frees highlight that they also share the experience of becoming aware of the apartheid past, and of the impact of that awareness on their thinking and being as adult born free. This is reflected by Keanu who states that he needs “to be aware” of the apartheid “history” and “act differently”. Born frees report that albeit growing up in a multi-cultural context, with no knowledge or experience of the apartheid past. They do in time become aware of the apartheid past. This in turn creates a racial awareness that they did not possess earlier. Annelie echoes this pointing out that she did not become racially aware until much later in her life. She expresses that during childhood, her interactions and friendships with other people were not tinged by racial awareness.

Annelie: I went to a public school in primary school...I wasn't even aware that there is something like a black child and a white child until much later in my life.

How born frees process this awareness differ but Keanu shows a constructive adjustment of his own behaviour, which implies that he is critically engaging with the implications of this new found awareness. As they got older, born frees started to gain knowledge of the apartheid past and its impact on society. Becoming knowledgeable of the apartheid past also contributed towards born frees developing a better understanding of the implications of that history on their current context. Tatiana posits that this “lived, shared experience” is what makes the born free generation “unique”.

Tatiana: And I think I realised when I was like 11 or something, that I was black. And like it didn't even happen at school, it happened at pick 'n pay. So, I didn't even know I was black! Such a thing didn't occur to me, I had Indian friends, I had white friends, we all made friends, we share lunch and literally at pick n pay, not even because somebody was mean to me at school it was at pick n pay where some kid and his mom were racist towards me and I was like ah * looks at hands (skin colour)* you know so I think that's what makes us unique, yeah just that lived, shared experience.

Born frees identify that growing up within this multicultural context provided them with the opportunity and ability to “enmesh” with different cultures and races. The exposure to, and interaction with diverse others in school has allowed born frees to work towards developing a new more inclusive social structure amongst themselves. But they also point out that they do become aware of the apartheid past, and this knowledge in and of itself has an impact on how born frees think and behave.

Underpinning the born free experience of equality is a multicultural school context. Born frees highlight that the interracial contact they experienced during their school years contributed towards the development of a very different social structure amongst the born free generation. They point out that in their experience there is greater equality, respect, and camaraderie between different cultures and races within the born free generation because they had the opportunity to interact with one another during their younger years. In this regard born frees see themselves as the first generation of South Africans to live integration. This integration in turn acts as a symbol of the privilege the born free generation have to live in transformed times.

5.1.2 “Letting go of the old and embracing the new”: Transformation as a “transition to a better state”.

Transformation is a concept with which the born free generation is very familiar and to them the term is synonymous with what it means to be a born free. Born frees refer to the change from the apartheid regime to democracy in South Africa as an example of the change with which they associate transformation.

Thendo: I can say transformation is change basically. It’s when something is being involved from one state to another, from one shape to another. So when they say somebody was there in the last 30 years or in the last 25-7 years have experienced or seen transformation. I can say basically they are talking about evolving from apartheid to democracy.

They describe transformation as a transition to an improved state or way of being. It is seen as a process of “change” with the goal of improvement. Eben expresses that the “intent” of transformation is to “transition to a better state”, “not to change, but not improve”.

Eben: Transformation I think, well the intent of transformation I think is to transition to a better state, right. From whatever place it’s, you want to transform to something better in the specific field you are looking at. So I think that’s the kind of intent of transformations. With an eye to kind of improve, not to change but not improve.

Born frees weave their understanding of transformation in South Africa into their understanding of what it means to be a born free. As a process of change towards improved ways of being born frees describe transformation as the act of “letting go of the old and embracing the new”. They describe this transformation as underlying “born-freeism” or “the ideal born free experience” as Tatiana later refers to it. The transformational changes from apartheid to democracy underpinned by the new constitution of South Africa contributes towards the freedom, access, opportunity and choice that underlies the ideal of born-freeism. This ideal further includes the implementation and practice of change away from apartheid, and its influence, towards democracy and equality in society.

Tatiana: I guess the same way that we said we embody the letting go of the old and embracing the new, I feel like transformation is the act of that in society, structurally, religiously, whatever way, educationally, like removing of Bantu education system and making sure that all students receive the same level of education.

Tatiana points out that this transformation extends to different levels and structures of society. Katana echoes these sentiments stating that transformation involves becoming “more integrated” and “more open minded” while striving towards an equal and non-racist society. These values underlie born-freeism and emphasise that to the born free generation transformation is not only embraced on a wider structural level, but also on a more individual personal level.

Katana: yeah, transformation is exactly means that I think, it’s just becoming more and more integrated, becoming more open minded. Because I mean like the way the world is going now, we are to be more and more open minded, and as we go along with the years we become more open minded.

Furthermore, born frees identified that the transformation from apartheid to democracy has been very much a legal transformation in which the new South African Constitution plays a major role. Born frees identify that the legal change achieved by the transformation from apartheid to democracy has allowed black South Africans access and opportunities such as quality education, higher income jobs, and greater socio-economic status in comparison to previous generations.

Phathu: I’ve seen that a lot of black people have gained access to facilities that they didn’t have access too. Black people can now get a quality education, they can go to universities, uh up there middle class higher class income household. Uh, their able to actually achieve a lot of things that they weren’t able to achieve before South Africa transformed. So, that’s just my whole interpretation of what transformation is in South Africa. I’d say for South Africans transformation was a legal thing because remember, what came and was followed up with the South African constitution where it literally had legislation that specified that blacks are allowed to do this, or uh can do this because its within their rights, it’s the law. So I would say it is a piece of legislation that plays a bigger role in the transformation that we are in now.

All in all born frees construct and ideal of what one participant called ‘born-freeism’. Born freeism represents the ideal of moving away from the Apartheid past, and embracing the “new” South Africa, its constitutions, values and transformation. As Tatiana puts it: it’s a stripping of the old and wearing of the new”.

Tatiana: It’s like a stripping of the old and wearing of the new or what was hopeful and you’re kind of a living being of that, yeah.

In summation, what it means to be a born free was defined as being born after apartheid. Being born after apartheid was described as living in a time where South Africans have greater freedom, opportunity and choice than the generation prior. They further emphasise that being a born free meant living at a time free of the influence of apartheid, discrimination, and inequality. Born frees also emphasise that equal access to higher education is one of the more prominent privileges they have as a generation. Additionally born frees describe that being part of the generation mean having grown up and received schooling in a multicultural context. They highlight that to the born free transformation and the changes from apartheid is their everyday life experience. In this regard born frees define what it means to be a born free as being synonymous with transformation.

Born frees view themselves not just as a generation that is defined by the transformation that occurred, but as a generation who have embraced that transformation and act as living proof and products of transformation in South Africa. Central to transformation, similar to born free descriptions of their generation, are the concepts of equality, greater opportunity and access to higher education enshrined in the new constitution of South Africa.

5.2. The transformation ideal in the born free reality: It’s two different worlds!”

Participants pointed out that what it means to be a born free and the reality of being a born free are often not the same thing. Born frees are extremely aware of the fact that the born free ideal as they have described it is not the reality for most of the born free generation. Tatiana expresses that despite having had the ideal born free experience growing up, she would “betray a lot of people” who “miss out” on having that experience. She draws from seeing her own family or friends who were not able to enjoy the same freedom as she has. In this regard, the idealisation of born-freeism and the born free lived experienced and reality are from “two different worlds”.

Tatiana: I feel like I’m about to betray a lot of people who haven’t had this experience. Um, but I do feel like I’ve lived the born free ideal dream, way I’m supposed to be, um education, being raised in a good home, in a good area, and being exposed to things I see a lot of things from my cousins who would, whose parents weren’t able to like, take them out of township, things like that, and its two different worlds! ... So, I think yeah those are the, those are people I don’t want to betray by saying that I see born-freeism in my life. I think they miss out on that, they don’t see it.

Eben echoes this, saying that the experience of being a born free is “going to be a bit different” when you look at “the bigger picture” because the “majority of poor people” do not have the means and opportunity to access the born free ideal born free experience.

Eben: I think in the bigger picture you know, where the majority of poor people live in in townships ..., I think the situation there is where it’s going to be a bit different.

There are still many facets of the current South African context that prevent born frees from being able to access and experience the freedom they have been legally given. Magda points to this stating that if you look at “day to day life” in South Africa “there’s really not that sense of freedom. The literal one.”

Magda: According to legislation we are born free but when you apply it to your day to day life, it is as if we will never be born free. If that makes sense. But according to the law and the rules and the government, yes it doesn’t exist anymore. But when you look at what’s happening every day, definitely we are not. ... And in the sense of free, I don’t also agree with that, there is also not really freedom of oppression ... there’s really not that sense of freedom. The literal one.

Magda expresses that although apartheid “doesn’t exist anymore” and that they are born free of that through “legislation”, the issues of that era, such as “oppression”, inequality, and poverty, still persist in South Africa today. This persistence contributes towards the feeling or belief that this generation are not currently born free but that they “will never be born free”. Keanu expands stating that although born frees are free from apartheid in law and “that sort of influence”, they are not free from the influence of apartheid through their “direct family”.

Keanu: Um, free of that sort of influence if you would but not really free from the influence of your direct family and that’s, I think basically the gist of it.

The born free lived experience is one where the apartheid socialisation lives on, and born frees are exposed to the social legacy of apartheid through older generation South Africans. The influence of the apartheid past is still very much alive in the mind sets of the older generation. Born frees note that although the influence of the previous generation is receding, it still plays a role in the present South African social context. They are exposed to it in their communities, social environments and even from family members.

Born frees highlight that despite what is envisioned for the born free generation, their reality is one where much of the access, opportunity and choice afforded to them by the new constitution of South

Africa does not extend into their lived reality. Instead, they describe a society that is not yet free of oppression, poor socio economic circumstances, and an apartheid mind-set.

5.2.1 “It’s just too idealistic”: Born-freeism” and the utopic nature of transformation.

Born frees highlight that transformation is described and constructed as a utopia underpinned by the ideals of born-freeism. Echoing findings from the literature review born frees show that the utopia of transformation represents a state and place where born frees are “free of the burdens of the past,... free of racial, political and economic prejudice” and because the democratic system caters for all the needs of the born free generation, they are expected “to flourish in a country which offers them so much” (Malila, 2013, p. 5).

This is corroborated by Keanu who states that born frees are “the generation that was birthed outside the influence of apartheid” and further emphasised by Katana, who describes the generation as born free of “apartheid, our past, everything...racism”. The born free understanding of what it means to be a born free draws from the promises and expectations of transformation that were made during the fall of apartheid and rise of the democratic regime. According to participants, born frees are “free to do anything” they want (Nduvho). There is no discrimination, they have “equal rights” (Phathu) and are “able to access education equally” (Thendo). Born frees have access to a plethora of opportunities around them including "going to school” and “going to higher education” (Katana). Furthermore, these “opportunities are not restricted” and born frees have the access and choice to take hold of these opportunities. As Pandor (2018) identifies, access to good quality schooling and higher education formed one of the main demands of South Africans during the fall of apartheid and rise of democracy.

The ideal of born-freeism and the utopia of transformation that born frees construct is paradoxical to the South African reality. Descriptions of transformation and born-freeism are idealised, and unrealistic especially when you consider that South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world (De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). With a Gini coefficient of 63, more than half of the population lives under the national poverty line (World Population Review, 2021). The democratic government has struggled to provide majority of South Africans with adequate access to the labour market, entrepreneurial encouragement, as well as educational and vocational training (Cronje, et al., 2015). The South African Labour market is plagued by poor employment outcomes and the continuation of racial inequality in earning distributions. Black South Africans still receive lower wages than their white counterparts and in turn face an income inequality of level of 74.2% (Statistics South Africa, 2020). South Africans face a growing unemployment rate of 28.47%, with the bottom 60% of households completely dependent on social grants to survive (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Sooklal

(2006) and Brynard (2007) highlight the existence of gaps in transformation policies in South Africa and that as of yet transformation has not been realised in South Africa.

Born frees express that the utopia of transformation may just be “too idealistic” to achieve. Although race may not be the dominant oppressive factor in South Africa today. Born frees identify many other factors such as unemployment, lack of quality education, poor socio-economic status, and income gaps that hinder the ideal born free experience for a large majority of the generation. This echoes research by Cronje and Kane-Berman (2015) which states that these factors contribute towards the continued economic exclusion and political alienation of the born free cohort.

Born frees express scepticism about the achievability of transformation as it is idealised in South Africa. They note there is “so much that has to change” and dealt with in order for transformation to be achieved. Born frees stress the “complicated” nature of these changes and this ultimately feeds the doubts they have about the achievability of transformation.

Hanno: I think that transformation is possible....There is so much that we have to deal with and there is so much that has to change for us to even get somewhere.

Katana: I don't know sometimes you think it's a utopia, it's just too idealistic to think of, because there is so many things that are like complicated around it. ...that utopia I think is so threatening to everyone because how do you even begin to achieve something like that?

An example of the transformative ideal can be found in the quotation by Tatiana: like removing of Bantu education system and making sure that all students receive the same level of education.” As previously discussed, many born free draw parallels between their understanding of transformation and the regime change from apartheid to democracy. The removal of the Bantu education system, saw the removal of racially segregated classrooms, schools, and curricula. It ushered in a time where black South Africans had access to better quality education and more educational variety than previous generations. The change in educational systems also ushered in a time where South African school goers had an increasingly multicultural school experience. The ideal or utopic nature of this transformation is expressed by Tatiana as “making sure that all students receive the same level of education.”

Although participation in higher education has increased since the fall of Apartheid, and more than half of the born free cohort have completed secondary schooling or a tertiary qualification, research shows that the South African education system is in crisis and that born frees are plagued by poor quality education (Roodt, 2018). Only a minority of the born free generation obtain decent schooling and subsequent tertiary education. Furthermore, the demands for quality education and access to higher education are still prominent within the current South African context (Pandor, 2018). The

fees must fall movements, and protests of 2015 and 2016 offer a good example of how the ideal of transformation has also not been achieved for higher education either.

Despite greater access and opportunity for a better quality education, many born frees do not possess the means to take advantage of these opportunities. In 2018, only 20% of the 12.71 million born frees eligible to go to institutes of higher learning, actually attended such institutes (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The costs of attending tertiary education has significantly increased for the born free generation, and many cite a lack of financial means as the main reason for not attending institutes of higher learning (Statistics South Africa, 2020). Where prior to democratisation the racial segregation and exclusionary practices of universities prevented many black South Africans from gaining access to higher education. In the current South African context, many born free are excluded from higher education, and even receiving a good quality education, by financial means. Katana notes that “being in the middle class you kind of have access to this born free life”. It speaks to the socio-economic restraints of the born freeism or the born free ideal dream because for those who do not live a middle class life style, which is roughly 30.3 million South Africans, the “born free life” is not possible. This system of financial exclusion means that the ideal of “making sure that all students receive the same level of education” as mentioned by Tatiana, has not been achieved. The fact that good transformative change with the goal of improvement, such as the removal of the Bantu Education System, can be successful, and yet not successful due to contributory and interacting factors such as finances and employment is what contributes to why born frees describe transformation as being too “complicated”.

Born frees identify that transformation has been constructed as a utopia where the born free generation are free from the oppression and inequality of the past. They have greater access, opportunity, and potential to succeed than the generation prior. Born frees have equal access to the same education and because of that a greater choice about who and what they want to be in life. They point out that this utopia represents idealised versions transformation that do not reflect the reality of the South African context. Born frees point out that despite the changes since the dawn of the democratic regime much of the expectations of transformation are unrealistic. Born frees describe that there is much within the current societal context that still needs to change and that they do not have as much opportunity, choice and access as society believes.

5.2.2 The “incredible weight on our shoulders”: Unrealistic expectations of transformation and the born free generation.

The concept of born-freeism and the ideal of transformation has led the South African society to have expectations of the born free generation and that these expectations place the born free generation under a lot of pressure to achieve. Societies expectations of born frees stem from the apartheid past and its transformation to democracy and “because the past is so close to” born frees, a lot of the change expectations from that transformation now rests on the shoulders of the born free generation.

Tumo: ... in my personal experience, it’s almost like there is an expectation for us to behave in a certain way because the past is so close to us. ... There’s this, I feel like there’s this expectation on us, and this weight that we have to sort of put out, make our output. Like we have to fix everything ourselves.... And I feel like it’s unfair on us because I don’t think that the atrocities that happened can be fixed in one “born free generation”. Just by labelling us that it extended this incredible weight on our shoulders.

This ties in with research conducted by Malila (2013) that born frees “are expected to be free of the burdens of the past” this includes being “free of racial, political and economic prejudice” and to “flourish in a country” which provides for all their needs (p. 5). This is further reflected by Tumo who states that born frees are expected to “fix everything” themselves. Born frees stress that society places pressure on their generation to solve current issues of transformation, such as poverty and lack of access to education. Tumo states that these expectations are “unfair” on the born free generation because the atrocities of apartheid cannot be fixed in “one born free generation”. He points out that by “labelling” the generation as ‘born free’ it “extends an incredible weight” on their shoulders that they are unable to uphold. This is supported by Norgaard (2015) who states that the term ‘born-free’ epitomises the unfair expectations and burdens placed on the born-free generation. Annelie echoes the same sentiment stating that there is “quite a lot of pressure” for born frees to “understand and grow”.

Annelie: I think being a born free, because it’s quite a lot of pressure, um on our generation to be able to like understand but to grow.

As previously discussed Keanu mentions that the “knowledge” of apartheid and the “history” of South Africa contributed towards and “understanding” and awareness that he needs to “act differently”. Both Annelie and Keanu’s comments relate to the experience of cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance refers to the mental unease and discomfort people experience when they are faced with information that challenges their existing beliefs, values or attitudes. As born frees have identified, their lack of knowledge of apartheid in combination with their multicultural lived experience allowed them to develop new values, beliefs and attitudes that contradict the apartheid past. Once born frees become aware and develop an “understanding” of the apartheid past they take on the task of

processing information, and a way of thinking and being, that is in conflict with the values, beliefs and attitudes they developed during childhood.

According to Festinger (1957) people are motivated to minimise the feelings of discomfort caused by conflicting information. They tend to seek consistency between their beliefs, actions, and incoming information and most commonly do so through rejecting, explaining away, or avoiding new information (Festinger, 1957). He also purports that the most effective, but also more difficult, way to reduce cognitive dissonance is through changing one's behaviour in accordance with conflicting information. By choosing to “act differently” Keanu shows that he has chosen to resolve his dissonance through changing his behaviour. It acts as an example of how born frees need to “learn and grow” and reflects the concept of “letting go of the old and embracing the new” that underlies the born-freeism ideal. The cognitive dissonance produced when born frees gain an “understanding” of the apartheid past causes “pressure” for born frees to change their behaviour and move away from such ways of being. When born frees take in the entirety and colossal nature of transformation, as they understand and see it, they feel intimidated. Born frees feel threatened by the expected achievements of transformation and whether these expectations are actually achievable.

Tatiana: That utopia I think is so threatening to everyone because how do you even begin to achieve something like that?

Born frees point out that the expectations of transformation created during the fall of apartheid has created unrealistic presumptions about the conditions in which born frees are expected to thrive. Instead born frees point out that they feel threatened to achieve a vision of change that is beyond the scope of a single generation and that these expectations create pressure on the born free generation to achieve heights they are unable to reach.

5.2.3 Transformation: It's a very complex kind of system

Currently born frees live in a reality where they cannot afford to take advantage of the opportunities made available to them. Factors such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, and poor policy practices interact and impede South Africans ability to fully access and make success of the opportunities that is now their legal right. Born frees describe transformation as an ongoing and interconnected process. Phathu previously stated that the South African constitution plays a major role in “the transformation that we are in now”. This implies that born frees see the legal transformation from apartheid to democracy as only a step towards achieving transformation. They emphasise their shared awareness that there are still “so many factors” that need to be improved before transformation can be fully

realised in South Africa. Born frees recognise that transformation requires more than the change of one system or structure. They point out that transformation is “complex kind of system” and that there are several interacting factors, including limited “access to education”, and “mind set factors”, that still need to change before transformation can be successful in South Africa.

Eben: It’s a very complex kind of system, if it was simple it would have been an easy problem to solve. It would have been solved already. But there’s so many factors like mind-set factors, many people don’t have access to education.

Born frees have to contend with a reality that is characterised by an insistent continuation of poverty, inequality, and violence (Burns, et al., 2015). As mentioned, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 63.0 (World Population Review, 2021). Also called the Gini Index or Gini ratio, the Gini coefficient is a statistical measure of distribution intended to represent the income or wealth distribution of a country (World Population Review, 2021). The Gini coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, or 0% to 100%, 0 represents perfect equality and 1 represents perfect inequality. Therefore a higher Gini coefficient represents greater income inequality in a country (World Population Review, 2021). In the South African population “the richest 10% hold 71% of the wealth, while the poorest 60% hold just 7% of the wealth.” (World Population Review, 2021). About 55.5% of the population live in poverty, earning less than R1200 a month. This means that more than half of the South African population are financially unable to access many of the things, such as “quality education”, that they now have a legal right too (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015). Poverty and unemployment are still major issues in South African society. Despite the fact that many South Africans may have greater legal access to quality education than generations before, they lack the finances to access this education. In the current South African context higher education is tremendously unaffordable and because of this “many people don’t have access to education”. The fees must fall movement is proof that a large majority of born frees are just not financially able to afford the luxury of quality higher education. Although born frees do have legal freedom and access, transformation as it has been idealised has not been achieved. The immense scale of poverty and inequality in South Africa makes the goal of transformation extremely difficult to achieve. Transformation and born-freeism as described becomes idealistic because, for many born free, there is nothing “new” or “hopeful” to “embrace”. Rather they face the same, if not worse, circumstances of poverty and unemployment as previous generations.

Born frees point out that transformation is a complicated process and that it has not been successfully achieved in the current South African society. Instead they highlight that there are still many factors that need to be addressed and that transformation is an extremely complex process in the present South African society.

Figure 1

The Complexity and Interconnectedness of Barriers to Transformation



Note. an example of why transformation is “complicated”.

5.2.4 Transformation: it's a luxury thing

Transformation is described as a complex multifaceted process that requires time and change on a variety of levels. Born frees stress the complexity of the transformative process and emphasise the extent of the needed change. In order for transformation to be realised, deep level change needs to occur in most facets and structures of society. In conjunction with the lack of education and “mind-set factors” mentioned by Eben, Hanno further identifies “spatial planning perspectives”, educational change, economic and “social transformation” as factors involved in this deep level change process.

Hanno: transformation from a societal perspective as I understand it is that there needs to be a move to have social transformation in the sense of that we all are on equal footing, and get the same opportunities, in a sense that we all have the same building blocks. Which means that our education system needs to be transformed, the way we interact with each other needs to be transformed, and the way even from a spatial planning perspective also needs to transform to be more inclusive of everybody and that whole thing, and the economical part of trying to equal the playing field.

Born frees see the solution to issues of transformation as being a change towards a system, or way of being, where everyone in society are able to afford and access the opportunities they have been legally given. Born frees imagine transformation as a process towards creating an improved system where every South African has the same rights and conditions from which they can launch their lives. The goal of transformation is to try and “equal the playing field”. Its aim is to achieve a system where everyone is “on equal footing” and “has the same building blocks” from which they are able to access available opportunities. Katana expands on this concept stating that, for transformation to be successful the “standard of living” in South Africa needs to be raised. Everyone needs to be brought up to a “similar scale” where they are sufficiently “fed” and “catered for”. In this regard, transformation becomes a “luxury thing” that can only be accessed by the elite who can afford it.

Katana: Transformation, it's, it's you know what when you say utopia, it sometimes feel like it's a luxury thing because I feel like everyone maybe needs to be on a similar scale, you know standard of living. You see so we can get there, everyone needs to be fed, their plate needs to be full, all the families need to be catered for, and people need to be sorted for that to happen.

In general born frees identify that in their lived experience they still come into contact with a lot of social, economic and political factors that shows that the apartheid past still has a powerful influence in the present South African society. They emphasise that majority of the born free generation do not come close to the “ideal born free experience”. Instead, they are still stuck in conditions of poverty, inequality, discrimination, and unemployment comparable to the apartheid past (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016). These conditions are why born frees state they lack “literal” freedom and contribute towards transformation being seen as a “luxury” achievement that majority of South Africans cannot afford. .

Born frees express that their lived experience of transformation is one that is reserved for a fortunate few within the population. Instead they identify that a great majority of the born free generation struggle under conditions of poverty which make it nearly impossible to enjoy the legal freedoms they have been afforded by the new Constitution of South Africa. Especially education. They emphasise that transformation and the opportunities it has provided for the born free generation has been idealised and do not represent reality. Instead born frees are stuck in a situation where they feel pressured to live up to the unrealistic expectations of South African society to fix all its issues. Born frees explain that transformation is a very complex and intricate process, one that can only be achieved over several generations. They further highlight that until conditions of poverty in the country are addressed transformation will remain a “luxury” experience reserved for the privileged.

5.3 “It keeps recycling itself”: The progress of transformation in South Africa is at an impasse

Transformation is seen as a complex and intricate process that will take time and requires continuous attention and involvement to succeed. Instead of an evolving experience, born frees describe transformation in South Africa as a repetitive experience. Stating that despite many positive transformative achievements, there are still factors such as greed, corruption and attitudes of discrimination that revert South Africa to a less transformed state.

Eben: As soon as something is rolling the ball towards transformation something else pops up, or greed steps in and there’s corruption.

Katana: Cuz we go forward, then we take 10 steps back you know, that’s constantly the situation that I feel like we’re in. Like constantly, like all the time, it just feels like when we

about to get there, um something, someone wants to make something salient about another person, like a racial issue just comes and pops up again, you know um someone with an idea somewhere, something. It's just like, or an attitude of discrimination, let me call it that way, because in all truth that's actually what it is you know. Just wanna discriminate against someone for no particular reason, just because of their past, or you know when different families and how they were raised up ... it goes from, it just cycles. It keeps recycling itself.

Katana identifies these patterns of division as an “attitude of discrimination”. She highlights how these “racial issue[s]” contribute towards a repetitive transformative experience, whereby we do not evolve but rather, are stuck in a cycle where these types of issues of transformation keeps “recycling” themselves. Born frees admit that they do “go forward” when it comes to transformation, and that to some degree, South Africa is making an effort and becoming more transformed. But, they also state that when there is progress towards transformation, it is “constantly” followed by a regression where “we take 10 steps back” from the transformative successes we have achieved. The need to catch up “10 steps” every time we make progress towards transformation, is what majorly contributes towards the born free experience of transformation as a “recycling” of similar issues.

Transformation as a cyclical or “repetitive” experience is not something that is limited to one or two born frees, but rather something that is expressed quite regularly. The barriers to transformation that we face today, including but not limited to “corruption” and “attitudes of discrimination”, are issues that we have not been able to overcome in the past 27 years of democracy. In this regard, born frees feel like the progress of transformation in South Africa is at an impasse, and that “nothing ever really changes with this topic.”

Annelie: I feel like it is very repetitive with everything that's happening, like all of the situations that I've been through, it's like the same things happen all over again. Like, nothing ever really changes with this topic.

Amanda: Transformation wise ... it's almost like everything is becoming reversed. It's like, there is a saying, history repeats itself, neh.

Where some participants note a progression towards transformation that is continuously followed by a regression from transformation. This participant also describes transformation as cyclical but rather experiences it as “history repeat[ing] itself”. In this regard, this participant experiences the successes of transformation we have achieved thus far as “becoming reversed” by the issues of transformation that we are unable to overcome. These issues of transformation such as corruption, inequality, poverty, discrimination, and the violent protests that stem from these conditions are seen as a repetition of history and in this way echo the previous quote about there being no “change” in the

topic of transformation. Instead of growing and evolving to solve the issues of transformation we have identified, we regress back to a less transformed state from which we have to first recover. Issues such as poverty, inequality, attitudes of discrimination, and corruption continuously prevent us from being able to advance to a truly transformed state.

The fees must fall protest, offers a further example of how issues of transformation keep “recycling”. The fees must fall movement started because many black students shared the same grievance, higher education fees are too high. The movement shared the common goal of lowering higher education fees for all students. Initially, the movement was strong, peaceful, and organised. As the movement gained traction its goals expanded to advocate not only for free education, but for the decolonisation of universities as an alternative to the perceived shortcomings transformation thus far (Makgakge, 2020). Decolonisation of education centres around three core concepts; decolonising power, decolonising knowledge, and decolonising ways of being through including and drawing from African indigenous knowledge systems (Makgakge, 2020). It aims to address the unequal vision of the world as it manifests itself within universities through institutional racism and an exclusive focus on the Eurocentric canon of knowledge in education (Chaudhuri, 2016).

This links to Vivian Burr’s (2018) social constructionist critique of psychology:

The idea that through science we are advancing toward a more and more accurate understanding of the physical and psychological world. Social constructionists argue that this way of thinking has led to the imposition of our own systems of knowledge upon other cultures and nations; psychology has been accused of being imperialist in its attitude toward other cultures and has colonized them, replacing their indigenous ways of thinking with Western ideas. (Burr, 2018 p. 7)

The fees must fall movement directly addresses this colonization of knowledge systems through endorsing the decolonisation of education. The decolonisation of education means that a nation must become independent with regards to the acquisition of knowledge skills, values, beliefs and habits.” (Wingfield, 2017). Decolonising education involves the inclusion and expansion of African indigenous knowledge systems and cultures through education curricula.

The social constructionist critique of mainstream psychology centres upon reminding psychology that its own grasp on the world is necessarily partial. It is partial both in the sense of being only one way of seeing the world among many potential ways and in the sense of reflecting vested interests. (Burr, 2018 p. 8) The discipline of psychology, like other academic disciplines, has been dominated by the work and interests of white, middle-class men, and this has inevitably shaped the knowledge that their work has produced. (Burr, 2018 p. 9)

The fees must fall movement identifies the manifestation of institutional racism as a means of maintaining the vested interests of those in power within the sphere of education. Institutional racism can be described as “the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage the [majority] of ethnic people.” (Pandor, 2018). The decolonisation of education has the potential to address the issue of institutional racism through expanding our ways of seeing and understanding the world, and in turn, the way we relate to one another. Research conducted by Cho, et al. (2017) highlight the advantages of including different knowledge systems in the generation and implementation of ideas for problem solving. Through the inclusion and expansion of indigenous knowledge systems into our formal education curriculum we not only increase our creativity and problem solving potential as a whole. Through providing an education where people are able to learn and develop a better understanding and appreciation of different groups, decolonisation of education also has the potential to reduce negative attitudes towards different race and ethnic groups (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). The involvement of the fees must fall movement and the issues that this movement identified and want addressed can be seen as a progressive step towards transformation and addressing the issue of racism still existing within the South African society.

Born frees highlight that within their own experience transformation in South Africa is stuck within a repetitive “cycle” of issues that prevent the country from progressing towards a more transformed state. They express that many of the issues preventing transformation presently have been issues of transformation since the beginning of the transformation agenda. In this regard born frees feel that they have been unable to escape their past, but instead are stuck in a social structure that perpetuates the attitudes and issues of the apartheid past.

5.3.1 The importance of “the bigger picture” in the transformation agenda

Eben points out that the recycling of issues of transformation acts as a “vicious cycle” and involves “complex factors”. More importantly he points out that it involves “the bigger picture”. In this case “the bigger picture” refers to a long term vision for transformation.

Eben: Yeah so it’s kind of a vicious cycle and like I said its complex factors, it’s the bigger picture.

Research found that “one of the main benefits of long-term planning is the avoidance of the cyclical behaviour engendered” by short term plans. Short term planning offers more immediate benefits but,

most often such solutions do not contribute towards solving larger more intricate problems such as poverty or inequality. In such instances the issue with short term planning is that it does not involve a future directive and because of this short term planning only offers temporary relief for larger issues. In order to successfully transform and solve issues such as poverty, “a long term vision” and “clear plan” for transformation is of vital importance.

For long term plans to be successful, short term plans need to be organised in such a way that the principle features of a forthcoming plan are known (Brada, et al, 1983). This shows that short term plans and solutions are not a bad thing, but in the absence of a long term plan short term solutions become redundant. A long term plan allows for the organisation and coordination of short term plans towards achieving a larger long term objective. The issue isn't a preference for short term solutions or immediate gratification, even though research does show that these things have an impact on willingness to endorse long term planning. But rather the lack of a long term directive to guide those short term rewards. In the absence of any future directives, when short term plans comes to close there is a hiatus in activity until a new plan is propagated (Brada, et al, 1983). Without a long term plan, this hiatus in activity is often followed by the recreation of short term solutions from scratch that “likely to ignore the long-term implications of their decisions, thus foreclosing certain future options and creating others without due consideration of the consequences”. The continuous recreation of short term solutions from scratch with no consideration for their future implications is what Brada, et al. (1983) refer to as causing “cyclical behaviour” (p. 971). Born frees note the “repetitive” nature of transformation, and how “nothing ever changes with this topic”. The experience of transformation as a “recycling” of similar issues may be as a result of the continuous focus on short term transformative solutions that provide temporary relief to issues, but do not contribute to achieving more permanent, long term solutions. Thus the same issues of poverty, inequality, discrimination and corruption keep “cycling” instead of dissipating.

5.3.2 “Clear guidelines”: Transformation needs a “clear plan” and a “long term vision”.

Born frees point out that very little attention has been given to developing a clear definition and long term plan for transformation in South Africa. A long term plan refers to a strategy for establishing future goals and guiding one towards achieving them. Such a strategy would include a definition of what transformation and its goals are, how, and by when, these goals should be achieved. In this regard born frees describe transformation as being “wishy washy” and lacking a “clear plan on how it's going to be achieved”.

Tumo: I personally have a pessimistic view ... I think transformation in itself isn't defined well enough. Uh its very abstract as a concept, and it's not taught in, or explained in a way to, at least it wasn't to me, explained in a way that this is what transformation is, this is how we are going to do it, this is the 5 step process that it's going to be done. It's very wishy washy

Tumo points out that in his experience and learning of transformation, it was never defined in clear and concise terms but rather as an “abstract” conceptualisation. This “concept” of transformation reflects what was previously discussed about transformation being a paradigm shift, or “changing the ball game entirely”. Tumo expresses that although we recognise that transformation requires systematic, systemic, and societal changes, the plan for “how we are going to do it” is “wishy washy” offering no clear guidelines or “5 step process” on how the vision and goals of transformation will be achieved.

Liana: I think that's where the problem comes in because I think there has to be clear guidelines on how long that time for the change is. Because if we transform now from one thing to another it can be in 50 years, it can be 100 years, if there is not a clear plan the change won't really happen, or it will happen very slowly and it will, may be ineffective. So I think that's also the problem that we have today is there's all this hope to change but there is not a clear plan on how it is going to be achieved and there is not a set time frame which makes it very difficult.

Liana points out that in the absence of “clear guidelines” and a “clear plan” for transformation “change won't really happen” or the change may be “ineffective”. As previously discussed born frees define transformation as change with the goal to improve current circumstances. Change with the goal of improvement requires a plan or strategy for identifying what needs to be improved, how these things will be improved, and how long it will take to be successfully improved. In this way, born frees point out that currently transformation lacks a clear definition, and long term plan for achievement. In the absence of these things born frees recognise that transformation in South Africa cannot develop further. Born frees stress that without a “clear plan”, “guidelines” and “time” framework, transformation becomes “very difficult” to achieve. This is not helped by the fact that transformation in and of itself is a very complex system, and will involve a plan that is equally complex in its construction.

Born frees stress the importance of developing a long term vision and strategy for transformation and how such a strategy plays a key role in breaking the repetitive and cyclical nature of transformation as it is presently. They point out that for transformation to be achieved in South Africa there needs to be a clear vision and plan for transformation that takes a long term perspective.

5.3.3 “Transformation is there in writing, and in words, but not in action”: a widening policy gap due to poor leadership practices.

Born frees point out that the issue of long term planning is further exasperated by poor leadership practices. Leadership plays a paramount role in establishing the structures, support, vision, resources, culture and ethos of an organisation towards embracing change efforts (Sooklal, 2006). The role of leadership is to clarify the values, beliefs, and goals of an organisation through the sharing of power and influence which engages the human potential and commitment of all stakeholders. Successful transformation requires leadership that understands and is committed to the cause of all stakeholders, but is also supported by all stakeholders (Sooklal, 2006). In this regard, born frees are highly critical of the leadership in South Africa. Born frees do not believe that South African leaders understand, or are committed, to the cause of transformation. Irresponsible leadership practices and false promises contribute towards transformation being there “in writing and in words, but not in action”.

Thendo: Transformation its only there in writing. So there is a lot of promises, there is a lot of constitutional rights. Some being put into our exposure without responsibilities. They will give you rights but not explain the responsibilities, so there’s a lot of promises, there’s a lot of written laws, there’s a lot of um free education promises, there will be job creation, unemployment is going down. Um, today a lot of people are queuing at the fuelling stations just to make sure they are fuelled up before the petrol goes up, the petrol price goes up at midnight. Because the people who are running our government are not so responsible, they make a lot of promises for what is gonna go down, inflation or the currency is going to be stable and everything but nothing is being delivered. We are experiencing a lot fuel prices going up, food prices going up, unemployment rate now, even before COVID it was worse. So I can say transformation is there, in writing and in words, but not in action.”

Thendo points out that “because the people who are running our government are not so responsible” the objectives of transformation are not being realised. He notes that although there are “a lot of written laws” and “constitutional rights” in terms of transformation, government does not provide adequate explanations of what the “responsibilities” attached to these laws and rights are. Thendo is referring to the responsibilities attached to being a responsible citizen of a democratic state. Education Services Australia (2021) identify that in a democratic society citizens responsibilities include; being knowledgeable of society’s major social, political and legal institutions; having an awareness of the rights and obligations that democratic citizenship entails; and proactive involvement in civil life, either formally or individually, towards building stronger, inclusive and more sustainable communities. In South Africa, the Bill of Responsibilities was launched by the Department of

Education in 2008. According to the 2008 Bill of Responsibilities published by the Department of Basic Education citizens responsibilities as it corresponds with their rights put forth in The Bill of Rights include; ensuring the right to human dignity by treating people with reverence, respect, and dignity, ensuring the right to life by living a healthy life and not endangering others but rather protecting and defending them, ensuring the right to live in a safe environment, ensuring the right to citizenship by obeying the law and ensuring that others do so as well, to name a few. Thendo is stating that as new laws and constitutional rights towards transformation are being instituted, citizens are not being adequately informed of these laws and how they should responsibly enact them. Despite making “a lot of promises” in terms of transformation and change, “nothing is being delivered”. Irresponsible leadership practices and false promises contribute towards transformation being there “in writing and in words, but not in action”. Phathu further emphasises this view stating that “transformation has been documented down and now the only thing that’s needed is to execute” or “to actually implement transformation”.

Phathu: I feel like the transformation has been documented down and now the only thing that’s needed is to execute and I have to say somewhat of the reason we are failing in some regards to actually implement transformation and for it to be, you know consistent somewhat, is because the people in the positions they need to implement are not doing the right job, or they are not uh playing the bigger role.

Despite transformation having been “documented down” in “written laws” and “constitutional rights”, born frees note that transformation has not been “executed”, or implemented in their opinions. This represents a policy gap, where the intended changes of a policy are not consistent with the actual changes produced through the implementation of said policy (Brynard, 2007). According to Phathu, the implementation of transformation has been “failing” because the people in leadership positions, who are in charge of implementing transformation, “are not doing the right job, or they are not ... playing the bigger role”. This again links to being a responsible citizen in a democratic country. In this regard, “the bigger role” refers what was discussed earlier about good leadership being committed to the cause of all stakeholders (Sooklal, 2006). Born frees do not believe that the current South African leadership is completely committed to the cause of transformation for all South Africans. Maphunye, et al. (2014) found that one of the reasons for this is the “lack of accountability and responsiveness” (p.178) by South African public representatives “to community grievances on public services” (p. 179). Born frees express a scepticism and doubt in the current leadership practices in South Africa, blaming the actions and intentions of leaders for why transformation is not being achieved. This is a position which Maphunye, et al. (2014) found in their study: Democracy without accountability, or accountability without democracy? ‘Born-free’ perspectives of public

representatives in South Africa. Stating that the “lack of accountability by public representatives was foremost among the problems identified by the ‘Born-Frees’ as impediments to the country’s democratisation” (p. 164). This lack of accountability is echoed in the earlier quote by Thendo that “the people who are running our government are not so responsible”. He states that currently the government is not performing in their roles as “responsible” leaders and because of this transformation is being delayed.

Tumo: because of mismanagement...the mismanagement of our government that is just, I don’t think that with how the country is working. Maybe in a perfect world, in a perfect society, where things work the way they are supposed to. It [transformation] may be possible but I don’t think the way the country is being run now, it [transformation] is possible.

Tumo also echoes what was previously discussed with regards to the utopic nature of transformation, pointing out that “maybe in a perfect world, in a perfect society, where things work the way they are supposed to” transformation would be possible. This statement reflects the “idealistic” quality of transformation mentioned by Katana. It’s important to note that born frees see transformation as a complex and multifaceted process that involves wading through complex and multifaceted issues towards an improved way of being. The lack of accountability of leadership is not seen as a sole contributor towards the lack of transformation “in action” but rather as one of the many barriers that have to be overcome in order to progress with transformation. Born frees point out that it’s not just the fact that leaders are “not so responsible” or are not “playing the bigger role” but that the “mismanagement” of government further delays the transformative process. This “mismanagement” links back to what Thendo said about transformation being there “in writing and in words, but not in action”, and what Phathu said about the need to still “execute” and “implement transformation”. In line with this Keanu identifies that government mismanagement contributes towards the insufficient application of transformative efforts.

Keanu: I feel like there is a lot of voices coming out saying that want transformation from this to that, and this to that. Um and a lot of it isn’t applied and when it is applied it’s almost forgotten about in a couple of years.

Keanu states that when transformative initiatives are “applied” they are “almost forgotten about in a couple of years” and this links back to the previous discussion about the need for a long term plan. Research identifies that often short term goals without a long term plan in place to organise them often leads to a hiatus in activity before another short term goal is set up. When new short term goals are set up in the absence of a long term objective, they are often started anew instead of using the knowledge gained from previous efforts and building on what has already been done. This process

can be seen in the comment that transformative efforts “are almost forgotten about in a couple of years”. Another fall-back of not having a “long term vision” or plan in place is that bigger issues such as poverty, that require major systematic and systemic change in economic and social structures, cannot be solved with short term solutions.

Phathu comments on this, stating that because of “mismanagement and ignorance” of the part of the government we do not have a “solid plan” for putting “informed structures into place” that will lead to successful transformation. “Ignorance” in this case refers to approaching transformation with a lack of knowledge or information about transformation.

This links back to born free comments about transformation not being defined well enough, and not having a “clear plan” of “5 step process” of achievement. Phathu is stressing that in the absence of a “solid plan” for transformation, transformation is being approached with insufficient knowledge, information, and understanding. In this way, this “ignorance” extends from South African leadership to include South African society as a whole. The preference for shorter term goals with more immediate benefits means South Africans do not consider a longer term approach to solving their issues. Without considering how short term efforts may impact long term results, South Africans do not consider transformation as a whole and in turn this contributes toward the “ignorance” with which they approach transformation. According to Phathu it’s this “ignorance” that leads to “informed structures” not being appropriately put “into place”, referring to the need for systemic change and how we are not approaching it appropriately.

Phathu: government really just does say stuff you know and never really act on it, and never really want to put informed structures into place. ...how are you going to do that if you don’t have a solid plan in place on how they are going to get to that point? So, I think the sources of it is just mismanagement and ignorance.

For the born free generation transformation is a “legal thing”. Meaning that transformation has occurred in an official structural capacity by being “documented down” in law and policy. But, born frees stress that this structural transformation is not being put into practice or “implemented” appropriately. This is why born frees are of the opinion that transformation is there “in writing and in words but not in action”. Poor leadership practices and issues of corruption and mismanagement are identified as major factors contributing towards the lack of transformation in “action”. Furthermore, born frees identify that the conditions of poverty that affect majority of the South African population create immediate needs that contribute towards a tendency for instant gratification that uncondusive to the transformation process. Born frees are not denying or devaluing the transformation achieved

through democratisation, they highlight that these changes are fundamental in the overall transformation of South Africa. But, these changes do not encompass transformation in its entirety, and that there is much in the current South African context that requires attention for transformation to be successfully achieved. Factors such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and corruption do not simply go away once identified and addressed in legislation. They are issues that need to be actively addressed in practice by individuals and the collective society in order to be overcome.

Born frees express that within the current South African context transformation is something that has been recorded in legislation but falls short in practice. They point out that although there has been structural transformation, the mismanagement and poor leadership practices of those in power do not reflect the transformation that has been documented down.

5.3.4 “To lead by example”: The issue of poor role models and guidance.

Born frees voice that the poor leadership practices have a further impact by not providing good examples for the South African society to follow. This, in turn has a negative impact on transformation because, as Nduvho puts it, if the leaders of implementers of transformation are “not necessarily transformed or trying to transform themselves”, then the people they are leading are likely to follow those “footsteps”.

Nduvho: it’s just that when you see the people telling you about transformation, not necessarily transformed or trying to transform themselves then society tend to follow that, those footsteps.

Thendo further expands this concept stating that leaders are expected to “lead by example” but that many leaders “giving out the law are not abiding by the law”. He offers an example of members of government “stealing money from poor tax payers” and “not going to jail” as an example of how leaders do not set good examples as law abiding citizens.

Thendo: Because sometimes even those who are giving out the law are not abiding by the law so we expect them to lead by example. If they are saying if somebody steals then the person needs to go to jail, when they steal they also need to go to jail. We’ve got a lot of people in our government who are stealing money from the poor tax payers but the law enforcement department or agency is not doing anything to them. They are walking freely out there, they are not being convicted, they are not going to jail.

A further example of how South African leaders do not abide by the law was given by Magda with regards to how nothing has come of “Zuma and the Zondo commission”. The Zondo Commission, officially referred to as the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture is a public enquiry launched in 2018 by former president Jacob Zuma to “investigate state capture, corruption, fraud, and other allegations in the public sector including organs of state” (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018). During the proceedings of the Zondo commission, Zuma was issued criminal charges which he attempted to circumvent in the hopes that the commission would conclude before he would have to appear before the commission and courts again. It was during the implementation of this strategy that the interviews for this study took place.

Magda: I mean, you can look at Zuma and Zondo commission now nothing is being done and it's been years already. I mean, and if the normal South African looks at that and they say if Zuma doesn't honour is Subpoena and you know go to court when he needs too, why should I? If he doesn't pay for what he's done, why should I? That's why you will see it play down to normal South Africans in the way of, if you get a ticket for speeding or for parking somewhere where you weren't supposed too, you are not going to pay it because why should you? Nothing is going to happen to you. That's the truth.

Magda stresses poor leadership practices “play down to normal South Africans”. When South Africans see their leaders not abiding by the law, like Zuma avoiding the law or the government stealing “poor tax payers” money, they are less likely to respect or abide by the law themselves. It produces a mentality of “if he doesn't pay for what he's done, why should I?” and “nothing is going to happen to you” that plays out in the behaviours of South African citizens. Magda offers up examples of not paying “speeding” or “parking” fines as a product of this mentality. According to Eben this mentality is possible because there is an overall lack of “consequences for actions” which reflects the earlier comment by Thendo where he states that “the law enforcement department or agency is not doing anything to” leaders or members of government who break the law. The lack of “consequences for actions” translates into the wider South African context as a mentality that you don't have to abide by the law because “nothing is going to happen to you”.

Eben: The main thing is there isn't consequences for actions, everything is driven by greed.

In light of this, born frees point out that they lack appropriate guidance towards transformation. As can be identified in the following comment, born frees do not believe that the current leadership in South Africa is “guiding” people “in the right direction”. This further emphasises the born free opinion that the poor leadership practices of South African leaders set poor examples from which South African society then models itself.

Tinus: I don't feel our generation can change if we do not have the right leadership mentoring us, uh guiding us with the right direction.

Here the "right leadership" refers to people who are responsible democratic citizens as put forth in the 2008 Department of Education Bill of Responsibilities previously discussed, but further extends to people who will act as "responsible" leaders who have the best interests of all stakeholders in mind (i.e. a leader who is willing to serve the needs of the people, not just "make promises" and "not deliver"), and will "lead by example". Thus offering South African citizens with a good example of leadership and how they should behave as citizens. Participants pointed out that South Africans are likely to follow in the "footsteps" of leaders "who are not so responsible". This has the implication that South African citizens themselves are not responsible, and don't necessarily uphold their responsibilities as citizens. This is evidenced by Magda who gives an example of "normal South Africans" not following the law when they behave in ways they "weren't supposed to", such as not paying a parking fine

The issue with this argument is that it is circular or hypocritical in a manner. Leaders are expected to "lead by example", to "abide by the law", guide society "in the right direction" and be good role models and examples of what society must emulate. But, as evidenced by the discussion above, born frees identify that "normal South Africans" are not willing to "lead by example" in the absence of good leadership. In this way poor leadership becomes an excuse for why the South African public are not upholding their responsibilities as democratic citizens. An excuse that hides the much larger issue of a lack of societal transformation, or willingness to "lead by example".

Phathu: I have to say somewhat of the reason we are failing in some regards to actually implement transformation and for it to be, you know consistent somewhat, is because ... it has to begin with, you know individuals themselves. If we really want that transformation it's going to start with you and I.

Phathu identifies that "to actually implement transformation" and for it to be "consistent" in its implementation, transformation has to take place in "individuals themselves". This highlights how "normal" South Africans do not uphold their responsibilities as citizens of a democratic society. Successful change is dependent on the support and cooperation of all stakeholders, not just leaders. This emphasises the fact that it's not just poor leadership practices, but also the poor practices of South African citizens themselves that contributes to the current state of transformation. Other born free believe that change and transformation would not occur until the current leadership "steps aside" and note that the barrier of poor leadership is possibly something that could be solved through the passage of time. Keanu identifies that through the passage of time, the current "generation" leading

and “running the system of society” will fade off and make way for “younger sprouts” who may “give birth to a completely unforeseen mentality in leadership”.

Keanu: So when it comes to change, or leaving something, I would say a lot of it is talk, and a lot of it you really can't do until the previous generation steps aside. ... I think that would be a barrier, but it could be a barrier that will fade due to time and as we get older and that generation that is leading in parliament and members of politics, and basically who is running the system of society. Um they will start fading off and younger sprouts will come in with perhaps the same influence, perhaps a part of the influence with their own ideology mixed into that which would give birth to a completely unforeseen mentality in leadership.

Born frees highlight that they lack appropriate and good role models which offer them an example of what to follow in order to achieve transformation. They yearn for guidance and direction but recognize that the guidance and direction they seek is not coming from the current leaders of society. They describe poor leadership practices as having the greater impact of leaving a society who models after its leaders. Born frees believe that one of the only ways to fix current issues in leadership is either for leaders to step down, or to wait until they age out.

5.3.5 “Making ends meet today”: The “scale of poverty” and its impact on “long-term vision”.

Born frees identify the existence of an “insistent” “belief” of “instant gratification” among the born free generation. This culture of instant gratification is defined as an “eat now mentality” where people are “not willing to do things for tomorrow”. Tatiana points out that the existence of a culture of instant gratification not only contributes towards why there is such high levels of “corruption” in South Africa, but it also keeps South Africans from having “a long term view of things”. Born frees relate to their parents and grandparents who fought for freedom from the poverty and inequality of apartheid, yet in their own experience albeit being free from apartheid. 27 years later, they are not free from inequality and poverty. These conditions persist and do not offer born frees a good example of the “larger benefits” that can come from long term investments. Additionally, poverty today is worse. Despite making progress in the reduction of poverty since 1994, the trajectory of poverty reduction became reversed between 2011 and 2015 and extreme poverty in South Africa was predicted to increase by 9% in 2020. Yang (2016) states that poverty causes people to rather “give up the long term benefit for the instant gratification” (p. 1297). Greater conditions of poverty increase both peoples need, and preference for shorter term solutions that are more likely to provide immediate relief from their conditions of poverty.

Tumo: There's this instant gratification belief that our whole young generation is insistent upon.

Tatiana: No one is willing, our forefathers were willing to die for something they knew they weren't going to see in their lifetime, um we had that kind of mentality were as now we don't really have it. ...on most things there's never a long term vision which is why I also think our, what do we call it, corruption. Yeah that's why corruption is so high because we all have that I want to eat now mentality, I'm not willing to do things for tomorrow. So I think that's what holds us back from transformation, we don't know how to have a long term view of things.

Born frees identify that the tendency towards instant gratification is significantly influenced by the state of poverty in South Africa. Approximately 55.5% of the South African population, around 30.3 million people, are living in poverty and 25% of the population experience food poverty. As previously identified, a Gini index of 63 makes South Africa one of the most unequal countries in the world. High levels of income inequality lead to issues such as political polarization, reduced income mobility, greater household debt, higher poverty rates, and slower GDP growth (World Population Review, 2021). Including the previously mentioned issues, South Africans face an ever increasing official unemployment rate, and the bottom 60% of households are completely dependent on social grants to survive (Statistics South Africa, 2020). This means that half, if not more than half, of the South African population are living a life of day to day survival. This “mentality” of day to day survival, of not being able to worry about tomorrow because you have to work on “making ends meet today”, is what Katana identifies as contributing towards a culture of “instant gratification”. In this case, instant gratification refers to immediate reward at the cost of potentially beneficial longer term rewards that may come from “thinking of the bigger picture”. Poverty puts people in a position where they are unable to “think about everybody else” and how their decisions “might impact the whole society” when their need is immediate and desperate. Conditions such as “starvation” leave people in a constant state of “I'm hungry now, I need to eat now, I have a family I need to feed now” that leaves them in desperate need for change “now” without the “time” and luxury of thinking in the long term.

Katana: I think the scale of poverty that we're in, it kinda, it's leaving us be that way, you know instant gratification, its leaving us that way wanting to survive the next day, it's just how our mentalities is going to keep on working around. We don't feel like were thinking of the bigger picture...we don't have time! To think of the bigger picture, when you know, you're starving. I'm hungry now, I need to eat now, I have a family I need to feed now you know, so I don't have the time to think about everybody else you know, or how this might impact the whole society, or my, how? I don't have time for that. So the poverty scale is

leaving us, our economic scale is leaving us in the situation where we are right now where we just, our mentality is thinking about making ends meet, today.

Born frees point out that the “scale of poverty” in South Africa contributes towards many South Africans being focused on “short term” solutions to meet their immediate needs. Research shows that the preference for shorter term solutions further reduce the poor’s potential for achieving long term gains, and makes it even more difficult for them to break free from the poverty trap (Yang, 2016). This is just one of many ways in which the scale of poverty in South Africa acts as a major transformative barrier. Born frees stress that the scale of poverty is so immense that in order to “reduce” or “eliminate” it, we need, and have, to implement a longer term solution when approaching poverty.

Eben: I don’t think we will eliminate poverty in South Africa ever, I don’t even think we are going to reduce it ever. I think because you know the way we are kind of approaching it, it’s always short term kind of things.

Hanno: We are trying to change all these things, with this whole thing in mind that it needs to happen now, instead of this whole thing in mind that it’s not our generation or the next generation that’s going to do it. But if we educate everybody, and we get everybody on the same level. It’s still going to take a few generations, but let’s start now.

The culture of “instant gratification” and demands for change that “needs to happen now” leads to more delayed systematic change, such as “educating everyone”, being overlooked. Systematic change refers to change that is methodical, structured, organised, and may “take a few generations” to be fully realised. It involves long term planning where people have to invest in change that they might not “see in their lifetime” but will be enjoyed by the generations after them. Born frees point out that because of this focus on “short term” solutions, the current transformation that South Africa is in lacks a clear definition and plan for moving forward. Furthermore, born fees also point to the potential “economical harms” that could come from not having a long term plan in place.

Annelie: We should allow for slow time because what’s currently happening is they are trying to kind of ‘prop’ [stuff] everything into a very short time and that can have an economical harms in there.

Brada, et al. (1983) point out that in the economic sphere long term plans maximise potential for economic growth and improved social welfare through more efficient allocation of resources over time, and more efficient implementation of plans through the application of additional knowledge gained from coordinating solutions within a longer-term framework. They further point out that the social welfare gains of long term economic planning are particularly significant and stand to

especially benefit countries undergoing extensive structural changes and fluctuations in growth. But, countries that are most likely to benefit from these social welfare gains are least likely to have the skills and resources available to develop good long-term plans (Brada, et al, 1983).

Born frees point out that another great transformation issue in South Africa is the severe state of poverty which a large part of the South African population face. The legacy of the economic and racial inequalities of the apartheid past has resulted in lasting effects of poverty, inequality, and discrimination that disproportionately affect the black population in South Africa. They state that poverty leaves the South African population in such a state of need that they are unable to think beyond the here and now. Additionally, they highlight how currently the transformative focus is on creating short term goals to meet these immediate needs and although it is necessary. It does address the issue of poverty in the long term. In this regard born frees emphasise that transformation in South Africa is not only hindered by poverty, but transformation is not possible unless poverty is eradicated.

5.3.6 “Changing the ball game entirely”: a born free understanding of transformation.

Born frees identify that the aim of transformation is to achieve a society that is truly non-discriminant, equal, and harmonious. The goal of transformation is identified as placing everyone in South African society “on an even playing ground” where they not only have access to “the same opportunities” but they also “get treated the same”.

David: I think obviously the ideal transformation that everyone would want is that everyone is truly put on an even playing ground, where everyone has the same opportunities and everyone gets treated the same.

Many participants have drawn on a game analogy to better explain their views of transformation, describing the goals of transformation as attempting to “equal the playing field” or to “even the playing ground”. Katana takes this analogy one step further stating that transformation is “changing the ball game entirely”.

Katana: So transformation is just becoming accepting and normalising everything that was kind of for the minority or whatever the situation may have been like, that it’s just changing the ball game entirely.

This statement alludes to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the transformation as seen by the born free generation. They not only recognise that as things are currently, South Africans, especially black citizens, do not all have the same circumstances and conditions from which they can ‘play’ the

‘game’ of life/survival and make a success of themselves. Further they recognise that the current organisation of societal structures and ways of being need to change, or rather the “game” needs to be changed in order for transformation to be successful. Born frees emphasise that transformation requires not only a change in how society is structured and run, but it also requires a change in ‘players’, who set up, maintain, and validate existing social, political, and economical structures. Through this analogy born frees identify that transformation not only requires a change of players, rules, and conditions in which the game is played, but they identify the need to play a different game entirely. As previously discussed, the example of the removal of the Bantu education system represents a transformation that did change the rules, players, and conditions of ‘the game’, but it did not result in a change of the game entirely.

To the participants in this study “changing the ball game entirely” involves not just systemic change, but a complete paradigm shift within the South African society. This paradigm shift is propelled by the born free desire to be free of “the influence of apartheid”. As put forth by Soudien (2010), born frees recognise that apartheid produced “an obdurate legacy of social and economic inequalities” on a structural level of the South African society (p. 4). To born frees transformation as “changing the ball game entirely” represents a change in the structure, composition, and power relations on all levels of South African society. It is about changing the players of the game (i.e. demographic change, social transformation which is critically important), changing the conditions in which the game is being played (i.e. reduction of poverty, unemployment, and university fees), and changing the rules by which the game is played (i.e. anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action policies). Born frees also agree that the legacy of apartheid is “underpinned by a complex skein of discriminatory political and cultural attitudes, dispositions and orientations” (Soudien, 2010, p. 4). Born frees call for a paradigm shift that involves fundamentally changing the approach and underlying assumptions reified by the apartheid legacy. In this way born frees imagine transformation as an entirely different game, or way of being.

Born frees describe transformation in South Africa as being in a “viscous cycle” that is not conducive to achieving more progressed forms of transformation within society. They identify issues of poverty, corruption, poor leadership, “mismanagement”, and poor societal issues as only some of the issues characteristic of the South African society. Born frees call for the development of a “clear plan” and vision for transformation in South Africa which has a longer term strategy and “set time frame”. In addition, born frees mention that they lack appropriate leadership and because of this they do not have the guidance and role models they need to emulate transformation in society as a whole. Born frees imagine a transformed South Africa as one where every citizen have all their basic needs met and have the same level of potential, opportunity and access to succeed in life. Born frees see

transformation not as a simple change, but rather a “complex” process of change towards a whole new system and structure within society.

5.4 “The rainbow nation”: Non-racialism and the “new” South Africa

For many born free the racism and discrimination of the past is something they have to contend with in their everyday lives. Research has shown that the patterns of racial division characteristic of the apartheid past continue to characterise the construction of socio-political life in post-apartheid South Africa (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016). Born frees are not immune to these conditions. Rather, they find themselves inhabiting a space in between “historical structures [that] perpetuate an apartheid-like existence” (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019, p. 1), and their aspirations for “future action and relevance” (Norgaard, 2015, p. 270). Born frees express a desire to move away from these divisions, towards a more harmonious and equal existence. The ideal of born freeism and the utopia of transformation represent born free aspirations towards a new South Africa. The aspirations of the participants in this study reflected the aspirations of former president Nelson Mandela who “cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities” (Masiza, 1999, p. 23). Amanda highlights the desire to “live in harmony without taking skin colour into consideration”. Nduvho echoes the same sentiment in her earlier comment “We treat each other equally like the skin colour doesn’t matter anymore we are the same we are one nation.”

Amanda: so you know, actually live in harmony without taking skin colour into consideration.

Tinus: in looks of transformation there shouldn’t be judgement you know. If I want to take my mate, black, Indian, white, doesn’t matter... I want to go have a movie with him, I want to jol [play] some games, uhm I feel that is the success of transformation in my personal opinion and in my own experience.

Race-relevant interactions are fraught with the risk of social sanction and misunderstanding. When placed in the ambiguous context of race relevant social interaction people often experience cognitive dissonance. As previously discussed, through choosing to change his behaviour Keanu constructively deals with the cognitive dissonance caused from his increased knowledge of the apartheid past. But, many others engage in less constructive methods of reducing their dissonance. Apfelbaum, Sommer and Norton (2008) identified that one of the ways in which people minimise their cognitive dissonance is through adopting strategic colour-blindness. Strategic colour-blindness refers to an approach whereby people avoid talking about race, or even acknowledging racial difference, in an

effort to avoid appearing biased in any way. Elements of strategic colour-blindness can be found within participant responses. Particularly they can be found in Amanda's comment to live in harmony without "taking skin colour into consideration", and an earlier comment by Nduvho that "skin colour doesn't matter anymore". These responses did not stem from a specific race, but rather reflected the larger 'rainbow nation' rhetoric adopted by the born free generation.

In the scholarly field diversity ideologies represent the desire and practice of improving intergroup relations between diverse others. Colour-blindness represents one of these ideologies and argues that prejudice between diverse groups can be reduced through de-emphasising diversity in group membership (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). In this way, the colour-blind approach argues that racial prejudice can be reduced through deemphasising race as a characteristic human quality and opting for a more inclusive collective identity that does not include race. This same sentiment is reflected in the rhetoric of non-racialism initially adopted by the democratic government (Urson & Kessi, 2018). The intent of adopting the rhetoric non-racialism was to develop a new, inclusive, and common democratic South African identity to replace the racially fragmented identity created by the apartheid past. The issue with this approach is that it does not take into consideration the structural salience of race and ignores the realities of systemic racism (Urson & Kessi, 2018). Although the intentions behind non-racialism and the ideal of a colour-blind society are good. Research shows that this "wilful blindness to cultural differences ultimately engenders more discrimination" (Cho, et al., 2018). By deemphasising racial differences people ignore the importance of developing an understanding and language to discuss race and examine their own bias. Research has identified that despite its theoretical potential to reduce prejudice, in practice the color-blind ideology has been found to contribute towards the reinforcement of group boundaries, prejudice, and discriminatory behaviours (Correll, et al., 2008).

In response to these criticisms the democratic government remodelled their rhetoric of non-racialism towards a more multicultural rhetoric of a 'rainbow nation' (Urson & Kessi, 2018). Within the multiracial rhetoric races are acknowledged, regarded as equal, and play a contributory role in creating a united South Africa. Underlying this rhetoric is the diversity ideology of multiculturalism. Within the multicultural frame racial prejudice stems from a lack of knowledge and understanding of racial others (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). It asserts that prejudice can be reduced through learning about diverse others, and the differences between groups. By gaining knowledge of diverse others people will develop an understanding and deeper appreciation for different groups (Rosenthal & Levy, 2010). This approach focuses on recognising diverse group's rights to maintain their own cultures and traditions, appreciating their positive contributions to society, and learning about important differences between groups (Levy, et al., 2012). Unfortunately, this approach is also not without

shortfalls. Ryan, et al. (2010) found that by drawing attention to group differences multiculturalism can increase stereotyping, prejudice, and bias. Just as with the multicultural diversity ideology, the modified non-racialism of a ‘rainbow nation’ has been criticised for reifying race as an essential human quality instead of understanding that racial categories also exist as social constructs that reinforce prejudice ways of thinking and being (Rosenthal & Levy, 2012). In this way, these approaches to reducing prejudice and creating non-racialism are shallow, and do not address the structural and psychological racial inequality that persists within the South African society (Urson & Kessi, 2018).

Despite the criticisms associated with non-racialism, it’s important not to forget that the intent behind these ideologies are to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations. In this study born frees continuously expressed their desire to transform intergroup relations to a state of “harmony”, where there is no “judgement” and “everyone gets treated the same”. Although elements of wilful blindness can be identified in the data of this study. Born free predominantly projected elements of what Yuval-Davis (2010) refers to as transversal politics and is reflected in Nduvho’s comment “we are the same, we are one nation”. Transversal politics are aimed at establishing a collective identity based on solidarity of common emancipatory values that extend across borders and boundaries of group membership (Yuval-Davis, 2010). It functions under an assumption of priori, or preconceived, respect for others and recognises that differences between people are important, and these differences are encompassed by equality (Yuval-Davis, 2010). The notion of equality resonates strongly with participant descriptions of the born free lived experience. It extends to include equal treatment of the self and others as can be seen in Nduvho’s comment, “we treat each other equally”. It is also reflected in an earlier comment by Katana about born frees being “enmeshed” with each other. The goal of “social transformation” as Hanno mentioned previously is stressed by born frees in that they describe a reality where they still struggle with racial discrimination. Born frees describe a transformed system as one where “there shouldn’t be judgement” expressing a desire to move away from the unequal and discriminatory ways of being they currently. Born frees express a desire and willingness to become more interracially symbiotic. To “understand”, “grow” and “act differently” not just from the apartheid past, but from the unequal and discriminatory circumstances within the current South African context.

Born frees highlight that their vision of transformation includes a social environment that is free of prejudice and discrimination. They express a desire to move towards a social atmosphere that is more inclusive and more open minded than it is currently. One where race is not the normal or dominant means of defining people’s experiences of one another. To the born free generation the concept of

non-racialism is ingrained in their sense of being and they feel it is their duty to continue and grow that worldview within the larger South African society.

5.4.1 “I experience problems with the older generation where racism comes to play”:

Upbringing and the endurance of the apartheid mind-set:

Born frees identify that the need for a more intrinsic individual transformation is particularly necessary within the older generation of South Africans who have not yet completely let go of the apartheid mind set. Tinus speaks about this same issue stating that the older, and in this case white, South African generation have not let go of the apartheid mind set and it presents itself in a riling up, and “encouraging” of a racialized mind-set “like we are still in that [Apartheid] era”. These are ways in which born frees identify how the legacy of apartheid survives in the mind-set of older South Africans and the negative impact of that mind-set on our ability to transform away from it.

Tinus: When it comes to the older generation and it’s like they are um, stoking them up (rile), um what do you say, it’s like they are encouraging them still, like we are still in that era. Which is not the truth and as long as we, you know have those ideas transformation will not be, there is not, then I don’t even a vision in front of me.

Born frees recognize and point out that the discriminatory mind-set of the past not only has immediate consequences for transformation but also far reaching consequences. Through upbringing parents pass these discriminatory ways of thinking on to their children, and in this way the past mind-set and its influence is kept alive.

Magda: That’s where the problem comes in because if you want change in the country, you need to go forward, the parents have to teach their children, ok this is the new South Africa, and this is how it works now. Um, you know and there must not, you can’t teach your children for example; racial ways, or teach them diversity or to behave in such ways and expect that they are going to be changed, because they are going to follow in your ways. ...children grow up and form their opinion based on what their parents think and based on what everyone think.

The older generation of South Africans who did experience apartheid have not let go of the “racial ways” of the apartheid mind set and through parenting the older generation passes this mind-set on to the younger generation of South Africans. Therefore you can’t expect transformation or that “these children will be changed” while they are still being taught “racial ways”, or being exposed to racist behaviour from their parents. Magda notes that this is a great impediment to transformation because

despite also teaching children about “diversity” and the “new South Africa” at school “children grow up and form their opinion based on what their parents think and based on what everyone think”. This statement reflects once again what Sooklal (2006) says about successful policy implementation requiring both restructuring and reculturing. In this scenario the diversity learning that happens through formal education represents structural change, and the influence of parents represent cultural change. Looking through the lens of policy implementation failure, Amanda is pointing to a gap in transformation due to a lack of cultural transformation from parents. This offers an explanation to the noted “recycling” issue of “attitudes of discrimination” and how the “under-workings of society” contribute to upholding these systems. It also exposes how the lack of emotional or cultural transformation is like a “cancer”. Structural reform efforts such as policy changes, a transformed more diverse education system, and demographic change has acted as a plaster, diverting attention away from the larger problem underneath.

Amanda: I personally feel that as long as the older generation, because our parents and grandparents grew up with apartheid when transformation did not happen yet. As long as they plant the seed in their children and grandchildren’s head that it still exists, we can never be. Transformation will never happen because that is what still is happening. And most of the time, personally, I experience problems with the older generation where racism comes to play.

Born frees stress the importance of changing this mind set in order to achieve transformation as reflected by Amanda’s comment that “as long as they plant the seed in their children and grandchildren’s head”, referring to the apartheid mind-set and its racialized ways of thinking, “we can never be”. What Amanda is saying is that the persistence of this mind set not only prevents transformation in a wider societal context, but it also prevents born frees, or children of parents with this mind set from being transformed because it sub-consciously predisposes them to racialized ways of thinking and being. Amanda particularly experiences problems with the older generation where racism comes to play” and this is an opinion shared by many born free. Research of cultural change supports this showing that because habitual behaviour provides emotional security in a threatening world of change, older people are particularly reluctant to replace their long familiar and comfortable patterns of being.

Eben: It’s like that mind set needs to change and that is a big barrier. That to me is the biggest barrier of all.

Eben states “that mind-set” of the past and the older generation “needs to change”. A mind-set can also be described as an established set of attitudes, and Eben is alluding towards the need for a change or transformation of this established set of attitudes away from the apartheid ways of thinking and

being. The need for this change is most prominent in the older South African generations, but as identified, through social interaction are passed on and reiterated by born frees. Attitudes are a set of emotions, beliefs and behaviours towards a particular object, person, thing, or event that is socially constructed, influenced by culture and have powerful influence on behaviour. In order to change the collective attitudes of a society, you need to change the norms, values and beliefs underlying the normative culture of that society. Sooklal (2006) identifies attitudes change as one of the factors involved in the reculturing, or the cultural change process.

Born frees point out that the generation of South Africans who did live through apartheid have not let go of the prejudice and discriminatory ways of thinking and being characteristic of the apartheid era. They state that as long as this mind set exists within the South African society, transformation will never truly have occurred. In this regard born frees emphasise the lack of, and need for cultural transformation within the South African society.

5.4.2 Lack of emotional transformation: It is an underlying metaphysical emotional transformation”:

One of the most prominent barriers to transformation identified by the born free generation is the lack of cultural transformation within South African society. When it comes to the implementation of large scale change, such as what is envisioned by transformation, does not produce the intended changes of the policy without tapping into both structural and cultural aspects of change (Sooklal, 2006). Culture is a way of thinking, believing, and behaving that characterises a group and distinguishes that group from others. The personal moral values shared by most individuals in a given society are largely culturally determined. The cultural aspect of change involves a change in the thinking of groups through the development of new values, norms, and beliefs that are in line with a given policy (Sooklal, 2006). Policies that require major changes, such as transformation policy, will not be successful unless both structural and cultural change takes place (Fullan & Mules, 1991). Policy research also shows that structural changes without tapping into the cultural aspects of change does not produce the intended changes of transformation policy (Sooklal, 2006). Culture has important implications on the formation and change of the attitudes and behaviours of groups, and individuals belonging to those groups.

Tumo: It’s very difficult for me to explain in plain English because it’s more than just an economic or policy transformation. It is an underlying metaphysical emotional transformation of what I understand to be a deep rooted hatred of each other in this country and that’s the

true transformation that needs to take place. But, there is no policy or legislation that can change that, that has to come naturally via, I don't know, the under-workings of society and human beings as they interact with each other.

Born Frees share the view that transformation has happened legally and through “economic and policy transformation” but they also share the view that transformation is a process and there is still much in current South African society that needs to be improved in order for transformation to be successful. One of these issues, as Tumo points out, is that there has not been an “underlying metaphysical emotional transformation” in South African society, referring to the need for reculturing or cultural change (Sooklal, 2006). For “true transformation” to take place it needs to occur in the “under-workings of society and human beings as they interact with each other”. Tumo is referring for a need to change what Norgaard (2015) identifies as the existence of “deep racial cleavages” (p. 268) within the current South African society that exists along the same fault lines as under apartheid, and contribute towards a persistent racial separation in the dimensions of identity, politics, and economics for all South African. Katana referred to this earlier as “attitudes of discrimination” and stressed its role as a “recycling” issue of transformation. Tumo identifies these attitudes of discrimination as a “deep rooted hatred for each other in this country” which is seen as a legacy of Apartheid, and the extended colonial past of South Africa. Other participants, such as Hanno, identifies this legacy as a “pent up anger” that South Africans “direct at each other”.

Hanno: There is a lot of anger ... it's been 20 something years and nothing has happened. We are still in the same position, worst, actually some of them are worse off and their angry about that but they do not know how to, where to direct that anger. So we direct it at each other ..., we direct it at everybody else. And I just, I feel like that's something that needs to be addressed, is this anger, this pent up anger that we all have for different reasons but end of the day it is that anger that feeds the violence in this country.

Born frees identify that the inequality, poverty and discrimination inherited from Apartheid in combination with a lack of change within the democratic system “feeds the violence in this country”. This is very similar to statements made by Carl Niehaus, suspended ANC member and Umkhonto we Sizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA) spokesperson, in response to the looting, destruction, and violence that stemmed from the “Free Jacob Zuma” protests in July of 2021. President Cyril Ramaphosa called it “some of the worst violence witnessed in South Africa since the 1990s, before the end of apartheid, with fires started, highways blocked and businesses and warehouses looted in major cities and small towns in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces” (BBC

News, 2021). Niehaus stated that the looting, destruction, and violence that stemmed from these protests was caused by boiled over frustrations from South Africans who have not experienced a change in poverty and inequality since 1994. This same frustration is echoed by Hanno who says “it’s been 20 something years and nothing has happened”, and acts as further proof the existence of a transformation policy gap. Born frees recognise that “true transformation” cannot be achieved through “policy or legislation” but requires a more in depth social, psychological, and emotional change in the “under-workings of society and how people relate to each other”. As identified in the discussion about the “recycling” issues of transformation, issues such as poverty, inequality, and attitudes of discrimination need to be actively addressed in practice by individuals and the collective society in order to be overcome. This is what Tumo refers to as the “metaphysical emotional transformation” that needs to take place.

Nduvho: If there is still hate within us, if we haven’t forgiven each other then it will hinder it will act as a barrier to the transformation that we need.

Nduvho adds to Tumo’s argument, stating the “hate within us” acts as a barrier to the “transformation that we need”. In this case “the transformation that we need” ties in with what Tumo refers to as “true transformation” and emphasises the fact that in addition to structural transformation such as “economic and policy transformation” which is critically important there is also a prominent need for transformation on the intrinsic level of South African society. The “hate within us” comes to represent the lack of understanding of the “root cause” for transformation.

Born frees identify that a prominent reason for the lack of transformation in present day South Africa stems from the lack of cultural and “emotional transformation” within the South African society. They point out that despite the cultural and “legislative changes” that have occurred since 1994, the attitudes of that generation persist. In this regards born frees point out that transformation thus far has not been able to truly reach the “root” of the transformative issue.

5.4.3 "It’s like putting a plaster on a cancer”: Confronting the legacy of colonialism

The attitudes, norms, values, and beliefs that underlie current South African culture has been heavily informed by the legacy of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. As previously mentioned, the continuous systematic oppression and disenfranchisement of black people through colonial history and during the apartheid regime in South Africa has resulted in the lasting effects of poverty, inequality, and discrimination in current day South Africa. Born frees have noted that since the change

of regime in 1994, a lot of effort has been put into transforming this legacy but those efforts have culminated into structural transformation through policy and legislation that cannot be successfully implemented without cultural transformation. For transformation to be successful South Africans need to recognise the impact of colonialism and apartheid on South African society, to critically engage with that knowledge, and identify how they may be contributing to or legitimizing the legacy of apartheid within current South African social and economic structures. Through doing this the underlying attitudes, norms, values, and beliefs of the South African society that is currently shaped by the legacy of colonialism should transform and “true transformation” will be achieved. The legacy of colonialism and its lasting social and economic effects on current South African society is what can be referred to as the “root cause” for transformation. The issue with cultural transformation, or “metaphysical emotional transformation” is that there is an “overwhelming majority of people who don’t understand” the “root cause” for transformation. Because of this many South Africans don’t recognise the difference between structural and cultural aspects of transformation. Neither do they recognise the “need” for a further cultural or “emotional transformation” on a personal level. Without understanding the “root cause” for transformation, and the “need” for cultural or “emotional transformation” along with structural transformation, any efforts towards transformation is like “putting a plaster on a cancer”.

Tumo: It’s going to take time and my personal experience of that sort of transformation is that; there are some people who want and understand that difference, but there is an overwhelming majority of people who don’t understand that that is the transformation that needs to happen and because they don’t understand the root cause of it. It’s like putting a plaster on a cancer, and as long as that is still in place. That understanding isn’t present, I don’t think transformation as we want it to be perceived will happen in the born free generation.

Structural efforts towards transformation, such as demographic change, gives the illusion of change, like a plaster. But just like the cancer underneath, the “root cause” and “need” for “emotional transformation” will continue to grow and continue to be a problem until it is appropriately addressed. This “cancer” directly contributes towards the “recycling” of “racial issues” and “attitudes of discrimination” identified by Tatiana. Tumo states that this type of transformation is going to “take time” which is echoed by Annelie: “You cannot force something like this, it takes time”. Research conducted by Brada, et al. (1983) states that development or change that involves major changes in economic or social structures will require more than short term planning or short term solutions to be achieved. Born frees have previously identified the cultural aspect of “instant gratification” among South Africans leave them less inclined towards having a “long term vision” and more inclined

towards receiving smaller more immediate rewards as opposed to larger more delayed rewards . This highlights the complexity and interconnected nature of transformative issues and emphasises the impact of culture on our ability to transform. The born free generation suggests that getting rid of the old mind set and discriminatory ways of being will require transformation on a more intimate and personal level.

Born frees highlight that the lack of cultural transformation is very much due to the fact that many within the South African society do not understand transformation nor do they understand the need for transformation within South Africa. They point out that South Africans do not understand that transformation, more than structural and legal change, also requires the commitment of all stakeholders to be successful. This means that transformation needs to be adopted and embraced on a more personal level by every member of society, not just the born free generation.

5.4.4 Debriding the “wound”: Reconciling with the past.

Developing this understanding of the root cause for transformation involves having to reconcile, and come to terms with the apartheid past. Not to be confused with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its minimally successful efforts to restore friendly relations between South Africans. In this case, reconciliation refers to accepting a situation or a fact for what it is, whether you like it or not.

Thendo: The solution we have to the hatred we have in this country is reconciliation. We just need to reconcile and forgive, some of us were not even there but we have a lot of hate as if we were there because we have a lot of information from parents and people who were there. So yeah I think we can preach reconciliation and act out forgiveness.

Thendo is pointing to the need for South Africans to reconcile with the countries colonial past and its influence on current economic and social circumstances. It goes hand in hand with discussions about having a “basic understanding” (Phathu) of the “root cause” (Tumo) for transformation. Essentially all three these participants are touching on the same thing and emphasise the need for a collective personal transformation within the South African society where they reconcile with the past and develop a collective and “basic understanding” of transformation, why it is needed, and what is needed. Without this, born frees don’t believe “true transformation” is possible.

Amanda: In nursing we are taught that when you clean wounds and everything, or whatever, you like jy moet n wond oop krap (you must scrape open a wound), you literally need to debride a wound before it can heal and I feel that’s basically what we need to do.

Amanda expands on the concept of reconciliation by drawing on an analogy of nursing a wound. Reconciliation involves “debriding” the wound that is the South African past and colonial history so that we can “heal” by coming to terms with it. Both Amanda and Tumo refer to transformation as some sort of personal ailment, a “wound” or “cancer”. In the same way Amanda states that we need to “debride” or scrape open the “wound”, Tumo refers to the fact that we need to stop “putting a plaster on cancer”. Both participants are referring to the need for cultural transformation, and how issues of inequality and discrimination will continue to fester unless we address the “root cause” of these issues. According to Tumo addressing the root cause of transformational issues first involves understanding what the root cause of these issues.

Born frees highlight how in order to move on from the apartheid past, and move towards a more transformed and better South African society. There is a need for many South African citizens to reconcile with the apartheid past. The legacy of apartheid has left the South African society wounded with issues of prejudice, discrimination, and apathy that prevent it from coming into its transformed state. Born frees identify that the initial step in healing these wounds is to develop a mutual and basic understanding of and for transformation in South Africa.

5.4.5 Going “against the grain”: developing a “basic understanding” of transformation

Born frees emphasise the importance and impact of the social environment on the transformation process. Since the start of the democratic regime, the South African government has accomplished great transformation in the legal and economic spheres of South Africa. But, born frees point out that these accomplishments are overshadowed by a greater need for change and transformation in the culture, or collective beliefs, customs, attitudes, and expectations, of South African society. Research shows that culture plays a significant role in creating and environment for change (Burnes & James, 1995). The role of culture in a situation of change is to either confirm or deny the legitimacy of new change arrangements (Burnes & James, 1995). In the context of policy, Van Dam, et al. (2008) state that culture, as a representation of the collective beliefs, customs, attitudes, and expectations of an organisation, forms the basis for the social climate of an organisation. In this case “the surroundings that you as a born free are in” Phathu refers to can be described as an organisational climate. It is a representation of the collective attitudes of the South African society or a social context, and is created and shared through “what the people around you” are “telling you”.

Phathu: I think the barriers for me is just uh, you know the surroundings that you as a born free are in, what is that surrounding teaching you, or showing you, or exposing you to. Uhm you know you are a, I won't talk about myself per se, but I'll just try to generalise to make it

more relatable. You are a young black person living in the villages somewhere in South Africa, uh what are you exposed to that uh in turn will make you take the transformation further. Are the people around you telling you “ah the government will never give you free education, you should just drop out and go find a small piece job” or are they now pushing you to say, “let’s go out, let’s fight this thing, let’s get free education, it’s within your right, it’s been documented and you get your degree and go out and be a better person”. Is the surrounding now teaching you about “no the other race, hates this other race” or are they now saying “it’s a South Africa, the rainbow nation if you meet this type of race, be civil with this type of race, make friends with them.” You know, so I think for me it comes down to that. Sometimes people have misconceptions about a lot of things, so when that misconception is passed down to another person it’s becoming a barrier of transformation because the whole line of generation is going to end up in the same way. So what I’m saying is if the guys who are in a position to influence the new generation, the coming generation, the born free generation are feeding them misinformation, or information that is not positive to the transformation that we are actually talking about then that would be a great deal of, you know I mean, dead end. So I think that is the biggest barrier.

He further emphasises the importance of what those “surroundings” are “showing”, “teaching”, and “exposing” you too. This links to the fact that the culture of an organisation can either be supportive, or resistant to the change process. Change projects that are in line with the culture of an organisation are likely to be met with a supportive organisational climate. If the required change greatly contrasts the existing culture of an organisation it is likely to be met by a resistant organisational climate. Phathu points out that the current South African organisational climate is fraught with “misconceptions” and information that is “not positive” towards transformation. He states that this “misinformation” is passed on from generation to generation and acts as a “barrier to transformation” and without this barrier being overcome, transformation will reach a “dead end”.

Born frees highlight that they do not exist in a social context that is completely conducive to the transformation process. Rather, they emphasise that for transformation to be successful the social climate between South Africans needs to change. The current attitudes, beliefs, norms, and expectations that underlie the organisational culture of South Africa needs to change away from the “misconceptions” and “misinformation” towards being more supportive of transformation and its objectives. For successful change the collective attitudes and behaviours of an organisation needs to be in support and thus be conducive to the intended change. Sooklal (2006) refers to this as the process of reculturing which involves the development of new values, beliefs and norms in line with the

intended change. This type of change becomes intrinsically linked to the psychological make-up and personalities of those affected by the change as it involves change on an individual, personal, and psychological level. Phathu describes this process as going “against the grain” and moving “away from the misconception ... the support system you have is feeding you”.

Phathu: The born free generation is a generation with a lot of information at hand, but that information isn't always positive. So with the information that you gather, and the influence that you have around, then it might just turn into something very ugly. Or in another end, you could go against the grain and use the information that you have to move away from the misconception that the support system that you have is feeding you.

Phathu points out that for this type of transformation to be successful everyone needs to have a “basic understanding”. He stresses that this understanding doesn't just stem from formal education also comes knowledge of “what really happened”, as well as knowing “what is going on” and “where we want to move too” in South Africa currently. Phathu is referring to the need for a clear plan for transformation. Furthermore, the need for a “basic understanding” of transformation is echoed by Tumo who highlights that many South Africans do not understand the “root cause” for transformation or the “need” to change their own values, attitudes and beliefs.

Born frees expressed their concerns about whether the current South African cultural context is one that is conducive to transformation, and stated that it each of them must make an effort to avoid misinformation and anatomisations. They emphasise the importance of developing your own understanding of the history of South Africa, its impact on the present day, and how these things link to the need for transformation.

5.5. “Creating something bigger than [our]selves”: The born free at university

Some born frees noted that although transformation has occurred in their lifetime, because of their lack of experience of apartheid they are unable to relate to that transformation. Rather, their lived experience is of an already transformed system.

Phathu: Because remember as a born free, I would say South Africa's transformation is our normal. I don't know if you get me but, it's our normal that's why I say there is not really a lot of things that a born free would say they had to endure first, and then something had to change later on or transform.

Phathu points out that for born frees transformation is their “normal” and unlike the apartheid generation, born frees did not have to “endure” things that needed to “change” or “transform”. Instead born frees grew up in a changing and transforming system, and because of this transformation as change is not really relatable to them. Born frees point out that transformation is their normal everyday experience and because of that they have not really ‘experienced’ transformation at their universities. The same sentiment was echoed by born frees in their experience of transformation overall. Because born frees grew up during a time where massive transformation was taking place in South Africa, transformation itself has become part of their normal lived experience. It was also highlighted that there is a portion of the born free generation unaware that they play a role in the transformation process.

Phathu: So a lot of born frees don’t actually acknowledge that they are part of transformation. Like even with when fees must fall started, obviously it was something that was long overdue and it had to involve the born frees because in that particular time they were in varsity and they needed the change so badly. But I’m saying they never really knew they were creating something bigger than them. So I would say the attitude towards transformation is positive and that the change they are making towards transformation is positive and they are making an impact on transformation but as I say its subconscious they don’t really know that they are creating towards something that is contributing towards the transformation of South Africa in the next 20, 50, 100 years to come.

This comment ties in with what Tumo says about there being “a large majority of people who do not understand” transformation, the “root cause” for it, or why it is needed. Phathu points out that some born frees do not recognise that they are, or need to be, involved in “creating something bigger than” themselves. It also links to the fact that born frees highlight the responsibility of being “self-aware” and having a “basic understanding” of transformation. But, as shown by Phathu, many don’t know that they need to contribute “towards the transformation of South Africa in the next 20, 50, 100 years to come”. It further ties in with discussions about the culture of “instant gratification” and how it predisposes people towards short term solutions with more immediate rewards. The predisposition towards short term solutions increases the likelihood that planners will “ignore the long-term implications of their decisions, thus foreclosing certain future options and creating others without due consideration of the consequences”. As Phathu stated, some born frees are not aware of the long term implications of their actions.

Tumo: My experience of transformation in university was non-existent because for me personally, I was in the system, I didn’t have anything to compare it to you know. If I compared it to what the education in apartheid would be like that’s an extreme because they

were taught in a specific way. They were taught the law then, but for us, well they were trying to teach me transformation while being caught in the washing machine of it. And, it didn't feel, I didn't experience it at all. I didn't understand what we were trying to transform from to where we want to go too and so it was sort of wasted on me. ...so for me it was just the order of the day, everything was the way it was there was no "transformation" in terms of yeah, how they define it.

The born free reality lacks the apartheid experience. They grew up in a system that has essentially transformed from apartheid. The born free experience is a democratic experience, and when they think of transformation they "compare" it to their lived experience within the current system. The born free lived experience is one of being in the "washing machine" of transformation. They were not involved in the fight for democracy or the development of transformation policy. Instead, they were the generation who inherited the fruits of the democratic transformation. The first generation to grow up in a system where transformation policy was implemented. This echoes a comment by Tatiana about born frees forming the "foundation generation" for transformation. Transformation away from apartheid is just the "order of the day" for born frees, and because of this Tumo points out that "I didn't understand what we were trying to transform from to where we want to go too and so it was sort of wasted on me."

When it comes to transformation, born frees apply their understanding of transformation and what it entails to the current democratic system. The current conditions of poverty, inequality, and discrimination in South Africa are well known. When born frees look at transformation as it is defined in legislation and policy, and compare it to the current conditions in South Africa they do not see transformation taking place. Born frees acknowledge apartheid, as well as the value and significance of the transformation that has taken place in South Africa so far. But, they emphasise that the objectives of transformation within their lived experience of the democratic system has not yet been achieved. Born frees are calling for transformation of a system that many South Africans who lived through apartheid believe is already transformed. They point out that so far we have achieved structural transformation through legislation and policy, but we are being held back from achieving the full potential of this transformation because the collective culture of the South African society has not transformed to embrace these changes. This shows how born frees "inhabit an in-between space where historical structures perpetuate an apartheid-like existence" and are moving in-between spaces of history, place, culture and education towards an identity and future that seems very unclear (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2019, p. 1).

Research also shows that institutions of higher learning have devoted little attention to addressing discriminating and alienating institutional practices (Pandor, 2018). Because of this "universities are

‘rigged spaces’ because of their foundational alignment to the norms, values, cultures, and epistemologies of the West” (Hendricks, 2018, p. 18). This, along with unaffordable university fees formed part of the demands behind the fees must fall movement (Langa, et al., 2017). Transformation at institutes of higher education has taken place but it has not extended to the “power relations, orientation, and forms of knowledge production” at these institutions (Hendricks, 2018, p. 18). This is what fuels the born free demand for a reconstruction of the ideology, structure and functioning of institutions of higher education through decolonisation (Hendricks, 2018). Many born frees recognise the fees must fall movement as their generations first real demand for transformation. But despite the protests and the continued efforts of the fees must fall movement, no true transformation of institutional racism or long-term solution for unaffordable fees had been achieved. This is why Tumo says that his experience of transformation at university was “non-existent”.

Born frees express that they did not particularly experience transformation at university. They point out that because they were raised within the transformed context, transformation is their everyday reality and thus the multicultural context of institutes of higher education was not new for them. They further highlight how the fees must fall movement highlights how the current higher education system is failing to meet the goals of transformation.

5.5.1 “Cram, pass and forget”: Short-comings of the education system.

Along with “time” born frees identify “education” as another important factor that contributes towards overcoming transformation barriers in South Africa. Born frees identify a need for both a formal and informal knowledge in order to make “informed” decisions that play a “bigger part” in transformation.

Phathu: I think a solution to this barrier is time and education. Education I don’t mean like a diploma or a degree, just knowledge of what is going on and what really happened, and where we want to move too. If someone has a basic understanding of that then I feel like everyone could make an informed decision in playing a bigger part in this transformation.”

Born frees agree that the solution to this transformation barrier is “education”. Education is a process of facilitated learning whereby knowledge skills, morals, values, beliefs, and habits are acquired through informal knowledge systems, such as family, religious leaders, or the internet, and formal education processes such as government schooling programs, or university. Formal education provides the foundation from which people are taught to know, and respect, rights, laws and regulations of a country (Moreku, 2014). It contributes towards a better society, individual and

collective growth and development, and better employment opportunities. It is seen as a major factor behind successful people and developed countries, and a pivotal achievement for future success on an individual and collective level (Al-Shuaibi & Abdulghani, 2014). The educational context provides a foundation from which people are able to form their social identities. Social identity influences the way people see themselves and in turn the way they interact with others by allowing them to be part of groups and find a sense of belonging in their social world. It contributes towards shaping and framing a person's understanding of themselves and their relationships with others (Hogg & Smith, 2007). The type of learning facilitated through formal education has a major impact on the social identity formation of students, and in turn the way they will interact with others in society and in turn plays a major role in shaping the social structure of society. In this regard, born frees such as Tumo and Phathu are calling for an education that leads to a "basic understanding" of "what really happened" in South African history and how it contributes towards the "root cause" for transformation. Born frees point out that the current teaching practices or methods of learning at institutes of higher education "don't go out of the box" and because of this they don't really contribute towards the development of a "basic understanding" of transformation. Furthermore Phathu points out that the focus of the current education system is to "pass each level" of this "standard set" of knowledge "until you get that qualification, then you are done." There is very little room given to transformation, or the development of a basic understanding of transformation, in this process.

Phathu: I don't think our current education system prepares us to do that because, I don't know how to explain it, but It's like there's a standard set of things that they have to teach, they don't go out of the box, hence that's why a lot of us we now rely on the internet and all this other sources of information. I just feel like our education system right now is trying to pass each level until you get that qualification, then you are done.

The fees must fall movement also highlights the need for this "basic understanding" in higher education and other issues that impede transformation in education. Many students participating in the fees must fall protest argued that that they do not simply require free education but a free education that is decolonised (Langa, et al., 2017). Decolonisation argues that transformation discourse and efforts have neglected to adequately address the Western Eurocentric nature of higher education in South Africa and how it neglects indigenous African knowledge systems. Decolonisation as a form of change is based on the initial act of colonisation in South Africa and forms part of an ideological battle to reconstruct the values that underpin South Africa's democracy. Change as decolonisation aims to expand the curriculum cannon, making it more relatable to African students and allowing relevant aspects of society to be included in the higher education knowledge base. It traces the need

for change to the history of colonialism, extending past the scope of apartheid it aims to achieve attitude change, particularly in the sphere of teaching and learning. (Makgakge, 2020). Decolonisation in this instance can be seen as example of standards of education that draw from “out of the box”.

Along with unaffordable fees, and the need for social transformation, born frees identify that the current system of formal education does not adequately prepare learners to succeed in life after school. Only a minority of the born free cohort obtain decent schooling and a subsequent education which endows them with the necessary skills to find employment and contribute towards the South African economy. As can be seen in the quotation below Thendo states that in his opinion the current education system in South Africa is “theory based and not work place environment based”. He further explains that the current system of education focuses on feeding students “a lot of theories” and information so that they can “write and exam” and be “promoted”. This echoes the earlier quotation by Phathu where he states that “our education system right now is trying to pass each level until you get that qualification, then you are done”. According to Thendo this creates a learning environment of “cram, pass, and forget” that leaves students without “skills” which they can employ in the workplace.

Thendo: According to my point of view is the education we are being offered is cram, pass and forget. You are given information to write and exam, after you write an exam you are promoted. But according to me education was supposed to give us skills, not necessarily being fed with a lot of theories, a lot of information that will not be applicable at our work places. Yes, they’ve got the FETs and they’ve got the Technicon’s where some people are learning practical and theory at the same time. But a lot of the degrees and education we get is theory based and not work place environment based, so there is no transformation in education.

Born frees also point out that the current education system is not achieving the goal of high-level skills training as put forth in the policy of Education White Paper 3 (Soudien, 2010). More specifically, the current education system is failing to develop student’s awareness of their role in national development and social transformation (Ndamane, 2018). This also links directly to Tumo’s comments about a lack of understanding of the “root cause” for transformation. These issues lead to higher education becoming a “status symbol” that only those who can afford the high fees of such institutions can attain. Phathu addresses this stating that this causes “resources [to] get wasted on people who do not need” these resources in order to get ahead in their lives.

Phathu: I just feel like our education system right now is trying to pass each level until you get that qualification, then you are done. You never really want to actually use it for its

purpose, it's just for you to have, for conversation reasons "hi, yeah I do have a degree in what, what, what" but it doesn't really work for you. And it's not really to get employed per se, some do it for employment but some do it for that piece of qualification and already while they are studying towards that, they are busy doing something they want to do for the rest of their life to make income. Degrees become a status symbol and resources get wasted on people who do not need it to achieve. So then it goes to show that our education system is not really helping the born frees do what they want to do or make the change that needs to be made.

In general, born frees note that there is a development of negative attitudes towards receiving a formal, or higher education amongst the generation. Phathu points out that "technology is at its peak" and access to the internet has made available a plethora of information and opportunities which Born frees could use to succeed in their lives without having to "jump through the hoops" of a formal university education.

Phathu: I think that the education that we are getting now is, I can't really say it's not helping at all. There is definitely some people who are getting an education, their using their education for the better and they actually love what they studied and are prospering. But for most of the born frees, and now I'll start talking about the guys from the 2000...I don't really think our education system is going to do a lot for them. Because now they are the ones who are living at a time where technology is at its peak, so as soon as they are done with matric they have already established what they want to do with their life, and in most cases they know where to get that information so there's no need for them to actually go and jump through the hoops and get a university education. I say this because I've spoken to quite a number of guys who have personally told me that you know "why do you have to go to university and do a 4 year degree, where else you can, in that 4 years, gain experience in that certain type of industry". So I don't really think the way the quality of our education is now will have a big impact on the born frees and helping them make the transformation needed.

The negative attitude towards a formal higher education argues the value of gaining "experience" in industry over theory at university in the same amount of time. It seems to be driven by the lack of employment outcomes experienced by born frees with a tertiary education qualification. Although participation in higher education has increased since the fall of Apartheid, and more than half of the born free cohort has completed secondary schooling or have a tertiary qualification, the born free generation is less likely than the generations before them to be employed (Statistics South Africa, 2020).

Born frees stress that education, and especially higher education plays a significant role in the transformation agenda, but the current education system is falling short. They describe an education system that is mechanical and focused on achieving a mandate instead of serving the best interests of its pupils. This is further supported by Hendricks (2018) who states that attempts to transform institutes of higher education in South Africa has been “uneven, ad-hoc and performative, with instrumentalised, technical, and ‘add and stir’ approaches being utilised” (p. 18) Born frees instinctually sense this and criticise the current higher education system for not preparing students for life after school. In this regard born frees call for a more practical and context driven education that focuses on developing people and skills that can directly and immediately contribute towards the South African society.

5.5.2 The unemployment barrier:

Because of factors such as, poor quality schooling, poverty, inequality, and high fees, majority of born frees are unable to gain access to the necessary skills to find employment and contribute towards the South African economy. Nduvho offers an example of how the issue of unemployment acts as a barrier to transformation through education. Not only does it prevent people from being able to succeed in their lives, but it also has a negative impact on those who witness unemployment and their attitudes towards education. She states that because her “younger brother” sees his older siblings who are “educated” without work or “being unemployed” he in turn sees no “need” for an “education” or further “qualification” in order to “go and work”.

Nduvho: The problem comes to unemployment. You know when my younger brother sees me being unemployed somehow he develops, he sees no reason for him to go to school why do I have to go to school if at the end of the day I will just sit at home and do nothing. There is no need for me to be education, my brothers my big sisters they are just sitting also, they are educated! So there is no need for this education I can go and work and do my thing without any qualification. So if such things are happening there is a possibility that the next generation may not be as educated as we are or as successful as we are based on what they are seeing now in the recent situation. So I cannot say I’m really excited, unemployment is a really big barrier to our generation right now.

This in part echoes the quotation by Phathu where he states that born frees through technology are able to access information and “establish what they want to do in their life” without needing a formal higher education. In this way, born frees point out that the higher education system in South Africa is not appropriately addressing the “resource” and “employment” needs of the born free generation.

In turn, they point out that the internet offers them alternative avenues of meeting their needs without having to receive a higher education. Because born frees are tending towards alternative avenues Phathu notes that because of this the higher education system does not have as great an “impact” on helping born frees “make the transformation that is needed”.

Born frees point out that another crippling barrier to transformation is the high level of unemployment faced by graduates of higher education. They stress that the value of higher education is lowering in the eyesight of the younger South African population who would rather look for alternative means of achieving success and survival.

5.5.3 The influence of politics:

On the surface the born free university experience seems more negative than positive. Poor policy, the presence of political parties, and mismanagement all contribute to incidents of racism, violence and misunderstanding at universities that delay the transformative process. Born frees particularly emphasise the negative impact of political parties in the university setting and how it contributes towards reversing the transformation successes achieved by primary and high-school education.

Tatiana: I think maybe, I like your born free question here because I think maybe when I came to university that’s when I realised I’m actually a born free, I did not know that before. Yeah I think I didn’t, in the same way it took a while to realise we were black and South African, and for Katana, even being foreign. Realising that you are born free and that you actually came from something different. I don’t even think I really, not that my parents didn’t teach me that I’m black, not that my parents didn’t teach me about difficulties of being black, but for some reason it became real in university, it became something I had to have personal concern about. Uhm, yeah and that’s when you realised wow, and I think maybe also it helps if you’re in university and maybe in a BA degree but I don’t think it’s just humanities people that get this experience, but maybe also because we get to study in depth the history of where we are coming from, the sociology behind it. ...and I was just wondering why is it that we were so blendy, like K was saying, in primary school and high school. Everybody spoke this ones languages and I think there’s those people who were able to continue that but it seems in university. I think like when that realisation hits us in all our different ways, sometimes it * indicates narrowing with hands* it, it recreates what was trying to be undone. Yeah because everyone starts to form political views, everyone starts to form different views, we are learning but then we marry those views to maybe a certain group which prevents us from being blendy like we were back then. Uhm I’ve noticed that, yeah.

Tatiana points out that it was only through her university experience that she realised she was “born free” and when her identity as a born free became a “personal concern”. She further expresses how a more “in depth” learning of the “history” of South Africa offered by higher education allow born frees develop a better understanding of the social causes and consequences of that history. What this shows is that despite the belief that transformation at university has been “non-existent”, Tatiana shows that the policy goal put forth in *Education White Paper 3* of offering “educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking” is being achieved for at least some students.

Tatiana points out the realisation of what it means to be a born free affects people in “different ways” and that it is not always positive. She points out that because people are still learning they often get caught up in politics and “marry” their current developing understanding of their identity as a born free with a “certain group” or political party. The current South African political agency is heavily influenced by “deep racial cleavages” which exist along the same fault lines as under apartheid (Norgaard, 2015, p. 268). Steyn-Kotze and Prevost (2016) describe the current South African political discourse as being dominated by “fragmented citizenship and apartheid-constructed racial identities” (p. 272). It is this influence and domination that Tatiana identifies as recreating “what was trying to be undone” by the transformation away from apartheid. This is also how the current political agency in South Africa contributes towards the “recycling” of “racial issues”.

Katana: It’s really true when like it takes us away from that, it takes us away from the benefit of actually being able to mesh in with one another. Um, being able to just come together and then it kind of just takes away from the experience of what it means to be a born free because like were reversing the thing, were reversing racism in a way, it’s like we are reversing back the boundaries, we are reversing back the, what makes us different, we are reversing, we are putting it back in place again because we are taking this idea, and it’s supposed to be a good thing to be woke and to be conscious of your position and who you are. It’s a good thing, it brings upon who you are but I mean like when it starts using, when you start using it to kind of differentiate yourself from other people when you were never that person in the first place, it just changes the whole thing.

Katana describes the impact of the racial division that continues to characterise the construction of socio-political life in post-apartheid South Africa as “reversing racism in a way”. It serves to legitimise and recreate the racial “boundaries” that existed during apartheid and this in way causes students to “differentiate” themselves from others and withdraw from the “blended” multicultural mind set and social structure that they developed during primary, and high-school education. The same sentiment is echoed by Tatiana who says that some political agendas through affecting

“finances”, “policies” and the “economy” undo what born frees had achieved as children in school, “which was to be that rainbow nation we wanted”.

Tatiana: I think when we all “wake up”, our first “waking up” in university. It makes us choose, or for people who still think in boxes and never graduate out of that, as much as they could have been blended in primary and high school, when it starts to affect their finances, when politics starts to affect their finances, their insurance policies, what they think the economy should be doing. The blended, it’s like we undo what we had achieved as kids, which was to be that rainbow nation we wanted because we all start to divide and now my political views and my religious views must align with my interests now and yeah we lose that!

Many born free note that their university experience contributed towards an identity crisis where the realisation that they are born free, and what the implications of being born free are in light of a more “in depth” understanding of the history of South Africa, caused them to question and reassess their sense of self, and place in the South African society. This can also be described as role confusion, and this process is heavily laden with cognitive dissonance. A state of identity crisis is often fraught with new information that contrasts and causes conflict with a person’s existing beliefs and ways of being. In order to move past an identity crisis, a person has to wade through all the dissonance they experience and reach a new plain of consistency between the information they are receiving and their personal attitudes and behaviours. This often involves restructuring the way you think about the world and behave towards others. Tinus and Amanda give an example of this restructuring.

Tinus: You live by that everyday thinking am I now being racist, am I now being sexist, and I think it’s a good thing because that is part of trying to transform the generation.

Amanda: If you do something wrong, you feel bad about it. And if you feel bad about it, like maybe thinking oh shit that was racist, at least I realised its wrong and I’m trying to make a change.

By critically engaging with their newfound understanding of their identity as a born free, Tinus and Amanda are engaging in a means of trying to restructure the way they think and behave with regards to racism. Born frees mention that despite the negativities within their university experiences, there are still positive things about the university experience that contributes towards achieving transformation. One of these positives is an interracial, inter-cultural, completely mixed social environment which opens the doors for cross group friendships, a better shared understanding, and more interconnected social environment. These factors contribute towards creating a more open-minded, understanding, and accepting way of being.

Katana: You know studying and having to be a bit more critical cuz like it opened us up, you know studying basically opened us up to a world where we kind of just got a little bit more critical about our position and our identity and so on.

Tatiana: Whatever you're studying, or even that critical psych book! Whatever it is you are looking at look at it critically in the context of South Africa and all of that made us go "oohp" I actually identify as this, and this, and this, and it prevents me from being this person who is this, and this, and this. We create a whole dynamic in interacting with each other, and these are the problems it creates, and these are...and your like * motions astonishment* I think it oriented us to society as well.

Tumo: when I took constitutional law and my prof teaching constitutional history explained how the NP government got around human rights that I started realising how...I realised the injustices and I started reflecting on how my upbringing was compared to what was actually happening around the world and I became ... more aware of what I was doing and that made a transformation in my life.

This just emphasises that even though born frees are dissatisfied with the transformation they have experienced in their lives, and they believe that transformation is not defined or managed well enough. On top of the fact that researchers such as Brynard (2007) and Sooklal (2006) have highlighted the existence of a policy gap in higher education transformation policy. Transformation policy is not completely failing, and the higher education system is achieving some success in producing students who engage in "critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance" (Department of Education, 1997: 1.13). Furthermore, born frees identify that it is their responsibility to uphold the transformation in which they were born, "to fight for it". Born frees highlight how their university experience contributed towards their own personal transformation. Born frees state that university provided a foundation from which they became more critically aware and conscious of the South African reality, and their place in it. University provided a place for born frees to reimagine themselves and their place in the world. Born frees point out that the university experience creates a lot of cognitive dissonance within students and sometimes this dissonance does not lead to positive proactive solutions. But, born frees also note that this dissonance is part of the transformative process and in combination with active critical awareness creates an opportunity for personal transformation.

Receiving higher education is viewed as one of the epitomes of the privileges a born free can enjoy. Despite experiencing the curriculum at institutions as inadequate and mechanical. They express that their time in higher education has contributed towards their development of a more critical, open minded, and socially aware mind-set. Born frees lament the fact that there is a political element

present on most university campuses. They highlight that in their own experience they do not find that political parties contribute towards achieving transformation. Rather, they feel the political parties on campuses are geared towards sowing discord and maintaining the mental divide that exists in the underbelly of the South African social structure. Born frees believe that the current higher education system does not adequately meet the needs of the born free generation. They point out that although their higher education has helped them be more critically aware and able to identify issues of transformation. It has fallen short in providing them with a foundation to practically address these issues. Born frees highlight the need for a different and more inclusive approach to transformation in higher education. Born frees not only call for a change in curriculum to something more practically and proactively oriented. They identify the needs for a strategy of cultural transformation at institutes of higher education that embraces the values they teach.

5.6 The responsibilities of the born free generation:

Born frees recognise that being part of the born free generation places them in a position where they have to act as a generational bridge between old discriminatory ways of thinking and being and new inclusive ways of thinking and being.

Tumo: So I think, when you ask what it means to me to be a born free, considering everyone else's, well societies responsibilities that they have placed on us. ... one: you have to be more aware because you are sort of the link between this generation that is going to be completely just colour blind shall I say, and one generation that only sees monochromatic colours, and that I think is a big change because it's so easy to stay racist and, or sexist, when you have the upbringing of your parents who lived in that generation if they were that way, and moving into a new, looking at the world, and what the history of our country was through a new lens. So I think for me it's, the responsibility and pressure that is being self-aware, taking that conceptualising it, realising it, and moving on from that.

Tumo points out that born frees have a responsibility to “be more aware” of the influence of apartheid and the colonial history of South Africa, and its impact on the social and economic structures of South African society today. But, also to be aware of their role as a “link” between a generation that only sees in “monochromatic colours” and one that is trying to be “colour blind”. Tumo is referring to the fact that born frees are the bridge between the “old mind set”, as Eben referred to it, and “true transformation” as Tumo put it otherwise. So born frees have the responsibility of acting as this bridge, of being aware of the “root cause” for transformation, how it influences them, and how they can transform it. This encompasses what Tumo refers to as the “responsibility and pressure that is

being self-aware”. It also ties in with reconciliation with the past, part of that reconciliation involves developing an awareness of how the “root cause” for transformation affect the self, and in turn how the self reproduces the legacy of apartheid, and coming to terms with it. Annelie echoes these feelings of pressure.

Annelie: I think being a born free, because it’s quite a lot of pressure, um on our generation to be able to like understand but to grow.

This specifically refers to what Tumo says about needing to understand the “root cause” for transformation or Phathu’s reference as the need for a “basic understanding”. Annelie doesn’t say where this pressure comes from only that “it’s quite a lot of pressure” meaning that born frees are experiencing a pressure to “understand but grow”. To “understand” refers to reconciling with the apartheid and colonial past, understanding how it has impacted society today, and why we need to change still, especially on a social and emotional level. To “grow” alludes to what Tumo refers to as a “metaphysical emotional transformation” of attitudes and behaviours that is guided by this understanding of the “root cause” for transformation. Annelie through highlighting the “pressure” she feels to “understand and grow” speaks to that. It’s not just societal expectations that place pressure on born frees, born frees place pressure on their own generation to meet the expectation of reconciling with the apartheid past and, at least having a “basic understanding” of the “root cause” for transformation in South Africa currently.

Once again reconciliation here refers to coming to terms with the apartheid and colonial past, and its implications for the issues such as poverty, inequality and discrimination in South Africa today. It means accepting these things regardless of whether you like it or not. The issue of whether people like it or not is why this reconciliation creates “pressure”. In order to place pressure on something that something needs to offer some resistance in order to provide a surface on which to place pressure. This resistance can be explained by cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance refers to the mental unease and discomfort people experience when they are faced with information that challenges their existing beliefs, values or attitudes (Norton, 2008). Reconciling with the apartheid past, for many South Africans, especially white South Africans means having to come to terms with information and a reality that challenges a lot of their existing attitudes, beliefs, and values. People are motivated to minimise these feelings of discomfort and often do so through rejecting, explaining away, or avoiding new information (Rodrigues, et al., 2017). A more effective way of reducing dissonance is through a change in behaviour but this is more difficult to do and people are more likely to engage in the previously mentioned methods of reducing dissonance (Rodrigues, et al., 2017). Born frees are pushing for a basic understanding that results in a change in behaviour and this creates pressure

because they are not allowing people to engage is the more traditional methods of rejecting, explaining away, or avoiding conflicting information. They are pushing for a reconciliation and integration of such information into changed behaviour. This is not an easy feat, not just for the ones who experience a pressure to navigate through the dissonance, but for those who create this pressure too. Phathu refers to it as “going against the grain” which attest to the resistance born frees face in pushing for this understanding.

Born frees highlight that despite the complexity of transformation and the severity of the issues of poverty, inequality, and mismanagement that they face. They still feel intrinsically responsible to carry on and fight for the transformation that they were born into. Additionally born frees see themselves as a bridge between old ways of being and new transformed ways of being.

5.6.1 “Be the change”: Personal transformation:

Born frees identify that it is their responsibility to continue the change and reform initiated by the democratic government and to proactively combat the influence of the past through self-awareness, reflection, and personal transformation and to achieve this, an overarching responsibility is to be educated on the past, and aware of its influence in our present lives.

Annelie: Um, I'll go. Yoh it's a tough one but I think we kind of have a responsibility to be educated on, um, what happened in the past. ... I think it's important to know about it and to know what the current situations are and what the current tensions between people are, and also try and have an understanding for why there are these certain tensions between people. And I think to a certain degree we have a responsibility to try and narrow the racial tension gaps.

What Annelie is speaking to has been discussed previously in quotations by Tumo and Phathu about the need for a basic understanding of the “root cause” for transformation. Annelie emphasises this stating that for born frees this is specifically a responsibility. It also emphasises the importance of education in the transformation process. Born frees note that it is their responsibility to carry on the change and transformation into which they were born and that this responsibility in and of itself is not easy. The responsibility to embody and continue to build the new South Africa through personal transformation is a goal intrinsic to the born free generation and not entirely imposed on them from external expectations.

Tinus: I mean I feel like our, the born free generation has a lot to do with change. I feel like we have a lot of responsibility to change a lot of things. Uh but yeah I really feel like we are the generation that should start changing the world and especially when it comes to racism and all of that.

Annelie and Tinus both highlight that they expect from the born free generation to take on the responsibility of narrowing “racial tension gaps” and changing “racism”. This emphasises what Tumo says about born frees being a “link” between old ways of being and new non-racialized ways of being. Hanno strengthens this argument stating that born frees need to embody the “values and responsibility that gets placed” on them by society and their own generation, and to “fight for it” because it is part of who they are and their “identity”.

Hano: what it kind of means to me to be a born free means holding those values and responsibility that gets placed on us, you know it’s part of who we are, it is a part of our identity, which means that we are the generation that has to fight for it.

This shows that born frees have integrated the values and expectations of transformation into their identity as born frees, and from this comes an innate drive or responsibility to uphold and continue that transformative change. Not just in legislation and economics, but in society and practice. Born frees stipulated that their role in the transformative process was to engage in self transformation. In order for transformation to be successful born frees note that transformation needs to be embraced and embodied personally by South African citizens.

5.6.2 “We’re just the foundation generation”: Transformation through the generation

Although born frees point out that they lack a long term vision or specific plan when it comes to transformation. They emphasise that transformation cannot be achieved instantly and will take time. Time is needed for the current leadership to fall away. Time is needed for the old mind-set to fade away. Time is needed to address issues poverty, poor education, and unemployment.

Phathu: I think definitely transformation can be achieved, not overnight but as time goes.

This is further evidenced by Tumo who states “I don’t think that the atrocities that happened can be fixed in one ‘born free generation’”. Change that may take generations to be achieved speaks to the need for a long term plan which research has shown is not a desired avenue for approaching transformation in South Africa. It was also noted that even if no efforts were made to continue

achieving transformation, the South African society has unequivocally changed and that change will continue throughout the next generations.

Phathu: Remember you age and grow up, another generation is coming forth and like I said with transformation we will get to a point where I feel like where racism won't be spoken about in the same manner as we do now. Because, already you see now blacks and whites are, you know, they go to the same primary school, they grow up together, and they become the best of friends, whatever. A hundred years from now that will be the normal so we won't even have conversations like racism. So that's why I am saying, if people in their respective roles are doing their jobs then maybe the change would be sooner but actually it will change, whether people are optimistic about it or not, eventually it will happen.

Phathu highlights that transformation “will happen” whether people want it to happen or not and it ties in nicely with O’Neil (2006) that states that all societies are inherently predisposed to change. The change or transformation that has taken place in South Africa since the fall of the apartheid regime and the efforts towards achieving transformation since has solidified transformative change within the South African society. The wheels of transformation has been set in motion and change will happen, we can only contribute to how much “sooner” that change would be. Phathu refers to the long term impact of growing up in a diverse schooling environment as an example of change that will continue into the long term. The impact of upbringing and time on the continuation of transformation is further noted by born frees when they reflect on their experiences and of the generation after them, specifically their siblings. Stating that they note a stronger sense of transformation from the generation younger than them, than they do from their own.

Tatiana: I would say um I don't think it's going to be our generation, I really think were just the foundation generation. um like looking at my little sister and how she interacts with her friends and just like political, their doing exactly what we did, um when we were in primary school and high school, but for some reason with them it seems like it's going to be ongoing and I that watching their age group right now in university, even though they are political spaces, they are somehow holding on to what they know from before, um for some reason. Um they can't be swayed, if my friends are black, yellow, green, and brown, they keep that! They don't change, for some reason, um so I think they gonna be, they gonna be transformation in action.

Tatiana echoes David stating that transformation is going to occur over generations and that the first generation of born frees act as the “foundation generation” for this transformation but the subsequent generations of born free South Africans are going to be “transformation in action”. She notes that

unlike the older born frees, whose progress towards transformation made during schooling in a diverse setting becomes heavily deterred by political forces during adulthood and at university, the younger born frees seem to be more set in their ways, and less likely to be “swayed” by political propaganda. She’s referring to the impact of politics and negative political discourses on identity formation or “that first awakening” at university. This is supported by Katana who says that the younger born frees are not as “cognisant, or as like aware of like the political space”.

Katana: They’re very liberal their very open minded, id also say its social media that’s just changed the game for them. Like we had social media, but the way social media is right now, um it’s just opinions are out there, culture is out there, you know everything is out there basically. So it’s like, that’s how I feel, transformation is just it’s along the lines, I don’t, you know what I think about them is that they aren’t as cognisant, or as like aware of like the political space in a sense. Uh like they don’t gravitate towards it too much to the point where they are *fixtulised*sic on it and it changes who they are, in comparison to us and our experiences if I can say so.

Katana and Tatiana reflect research findings by Malila (2013) that many born frees are “politically disengaged” (p. 6), or rather averse to political influence to some degree. But they also reflect findings by Sokfa, et al. (2015) that born frees are socio-politically active and have created alternative spaces in which they explore their social and political identities. It also links to Yuval-Davis’ (2010) study and the difference between identity politics and transversal politics. Identity politics often involve the acceptance of a leader or group of leaders as representative of a specific group but also as the authoritative voice behind what constitutes as identifying, or being identified with that group (Yuval-Davis, 2010). It refers to a subset of politics where groups of people who share a particular identity, be it racial, religious, or cultural, seek to promote their own interests or concerns by forming political alliances and moving away from more traditional broad-coalition party politics (Yuval-Davis, 2010). The born free generation seem to be moving away from identity politics, or rather are less “swayed” by these types of politics as put by Tatiana. As an alternative to identity politics, transversal politics are aimed at establishing a collective identity based on solidarity of common emancipatory values that extends across borders and boundaries of group membership. It is based on a view very similar to social constructionism: that the world or reality consists of many different viewpoints and knowledge based on just one such viewpoint is incomplete. The only way to construct the truth is to draw from a wide variety of different viewpoints. Transversal politics functions under an assumption of priori, or preconceived, respect for others and recognises that differences between people are

important, and these differences are encompassed by equality. Transversal politics in turn can be used as an example of an alternative way in which born frees may construct their socio political identity.

Born frees highlight that transformation is not something that can be achieved in a single generation but rather requires the co-ordinated efforts of several generations. In this regard they highlight that transformation has already evolved in the generations of South Africans who are younger than the participants.

5.6.3 "It starts with the roots and your upbringing must be right": The importance of upbringing

Born frees show a kind of resignation to their circumstances, and acceptance that they will not be the generation to achieve “true transformation” in South Africa. This is reflected where Tatiana refers to the older born frees as the “foundation generation” and says that their focus is more on transforming within themselves and “looking less for confirmation from outside”. Its alluding to the fact that older born frees have withdrawn somewhat from externally participating in the transformation process. This ties in with findings by Norgaard (2015) that born frees tend to have an individualistic quality when it comes to their attitudes about transformation and success, and because of this they withdraw from engaging in political action. Born frees feel powerless when it comes to affecting factors such as poverty, inequality, politics and corruption in South Africa. This is one of the main reasons why born frees do not vote (Norgaard, 2015).

Tatiana: Um and I think for us transformation, I think we are just more focused on transforming within ourselves, were looking less for confirmation from the outside. Eish, I would say I have a regretful attitude * laughs* like we had so much, but we just fizzled out. Like those movie child kids who never really made it. Um but you know what I’m proud of our generation, I’m happy to be part of it. I think man we try, I think we try. We’re a generation of tryers.

When it comes to the discrimination and racist attitudes of the previous generation. Born frees have kind of just accepted that there is nothing they can do to change the mind-set of their parents or older community members. They may be able to make changes where they can, but the cognitive dissonance experienced by the older generation of South Africans creates more resistance than born frees are able to combat on their own. With that realisation they are more inclined to focus on self-transformation, and moving away from the past mind set personally. So although the tendency to focus on the self may tie in with the individualistic tendency mentioned by Norgaard (2015), born

frees do not completely remove themselves from society. Not only is this shown by Sofka, et al. (2015) but it is supported by the fact that personal transformation is part of the wider transformation objective of achieving “metaphysical emotional transformation”. In this way the individualistic tendency for self-transformation is situated within the wider collectivistic role of cultural transformation. Born frees believe that through personal transformation they will be better equipped to raise a new generation of South Africans who are more removed from the past mind-set and more inclined towards achieving transformation for all in South Africa.

Annelie: I do see how many people of our generation will raise their children differently than say now our parents were raised and our grandparents were raised. ... I do see it getting better and better in a social manner.”

Magda: We don't raise our kids with these ideas and sometime eventually it will have to stop. But obviously the older generation firsthandly*sic experienced that and are encouraging it with their kids, but our generation didn't experience it so we have to be the change to not carry it on.

In tangent with personal transformation born frees emphasise the importance of upbringing and the influence that their personal transformation will have on raising children with a mind-set removed from the apartheid past. Annelie points out that through personal transformation born frees will “raise their children differently” in comparison to previous generations. Magda echoes this view stating that born frees don't raise their kids with the “ideas” of the past. Magda also emphasises the wider collective goal of cultural transformation, “we have to be the change not to carry it on”. So even though born frees may be politically and to some degree socially disengaged from transformation, through personal transformation and its effect on their parenting, they are still practicing “transformation in action”. To the born frees upbringing plays a major role in achieving transformation and stress that in order to achieve transformation the children of South Africa need to be raised by parents with a transformed mind set.

Tinus: I feel it is got to do with your upbringing so for me when I have a child, I will hopefully teach him the right way. And once again, I am not my child, and they are going to go find their own destiny and make due what they want with their life. But I mean I think it starts at the roots and I also think for us we play a very key part because that old mind set, we need to channel that out if we really want to make a difference because otherwise we are just going to carry that on to the next generation. ... But if we could just all get rid of the old mind-set...it starts with the roots and your upbringing must be right, that's what I feel.

Born frees stress not only how the legacy of apartheid lives on in the mind set of many South Africans today, but they also point out that it falls on them to “channel” out this “old mind set” not only through cultural transformation, or “metaphysical emotional transformation” as Tumo identified, but through the passing this mind set on to their children in “upbringing”. Born frees identify that the same mechanism by which the legacy of apartheid lives on in South African society today must be used to prevent this legacy from continuing on to the next generation of South Africans. In this regards born frees are referring to a systematic, and systemic social change that will progress from one generation to the next.

Tinus points out that this type of transformation, one of changing a mind-set, “starts at the roots” and echoes earlier discussions of the “root cause” of transformation. Born frees seem to allude to the need for a bottom-up, or grassroots approach to transformation. Research supports this view and shows that in general transformation in South Africa has been approached from a top-down directive which has led to a great disjunction between the expectations of transformation and the actual achievements. As previously identified, the attitudes and behaviours of South Africans are not completely conducive towards the change process. South Africans are not willing to “lead by example” nor do they place enough “pressure” on leaders to achieve transformation. These conditions create a gap between the expected and actual outcomes of transformative efforts and in terms of transformation policy, represent a policy gap (Brynard, 2007). According to Sooklal (2006), one of the reasons gaps in policy occur is because the social systems and cultures within the policy context are not in line with policy vision. The factors of poor leadership practices, and the poor behavioural tendencies identified earlier highlight the fact that South Africans are not completely supportive of the transformation objective, or rather they have not internalised the goals of transformation. Because of this many transformative efforts fail, and issues of transformation “recycle” themselves.

Despite showing an unwillingness to actively get involved in addressing the need for a change of attitude in the older generation. Born frees show that they are more inclined to contribute towards transformation in a different manner. Specifically born frees highlight that they are likely to have a great impact on transformation through the upbringing of their own children. Unlike their experience which saw the perpetuation of the apartheid mind set, born frees point out that through raising their own children born frees will slowly eliminate the discriminatory mind-set of the past.

5.6.4 “I say we'd change this space”: The role of public pressure, or the lack thereof.

Born frees state that their role in the transformative process is to question current practices and to place pressure on political figures and leaders to become more responsible and accountable in their positions.

Phathu: I think that the born frees are defining the roles. You know like I said we have a very big gap between the guys who are in power and the guys who need of service delivery, and change and transformation. But I think the born frees now are pushing the guys in power. They are taking a stand and showing them that we know our rights, we know are obligated to do this for us and you are not delivering, so it's either you step out or you deliver. ... So I think what born frees are doing in terms of transformation is just pushing the guys with power to make sure that transformation is moving forward.

Phathu points out that there is a “big gap” between those “who are in power” and those in need of “service delivery”. He is specifically referring to the policy gap explored in the literature review. Researchers such as Brynard (2007) have discussed the transformation policy gap in South Africa at length. By “pushing the guys in power” to address these gaps Phathu touches on the need for greater “public pressure” identified by Hanno. Born frees feel that the solution to some of the issues of poor leadership lies in the democratic power of the South African society. They point out that South African citizens have the power to influence leadership in this country and need to do so through well informed decisions. They also point out that often the South African public does not place enough “pressure” on the government to achieve their transformative objectives.

Hanno: We have everything in place, it's just not being done properly and the reason it's not being done properly is because there is not enough public pressure for the government to do it.

Thendo points out that South African citizens through “voting power” choose who is in leadership, and it is their responsibility then to make diligent and well informed choices in leadership. Leaders should be chosen based on their “character and qualities” and not on the “promises” they make prior to elections.

Thendo: I can say society is the solution, the constitution gives us that power to choose who is leading us. We have the voting power so we decide who must be in leadership so the society must look for qualities, not these promises. Because when election time comes around they will move around, even pastors, promising jobs and a lot of things. So I think society must consider how a person lives even before the election or before we are about to go into elections. They look at the character of the person, can this person be a leader ... so, they decide who must be their leader based on the character and qualities of that person.

In this way, born frees also recognise that the onus of responsibility falls on their shoulders, and the shoulders of All South Africans, too. Not only do South African citizens need to responsibly uphold their rights in their own actions, but they have a responsibility to choose leaders who do the same. In line with this, Hanno identifies, part of the reason transformation has not received the needed attention is because “there is not enough public pressure for the government to do it”. Meaning that the South African “public” are also not putting in the needed effort for transformation to go forward. Hanno mirrors a similar comment made by Thendo about transformation “being there in writing and words”, and Phathu who stated that transformation has been “documented down” and just needs to be “executed”. Born frees seem to share an understanding that they do have “everything in place” in order to make transformation a success. These comments reflect findings from the literature review that there is an expectation that the democratic system can provide for all the needs of the born free generation. Norgaard (2015) has commented on the idealistic nature of these expectations, which corresponds with the “idealistic” or “utopic” nature of transformation as identified by Tatiana and Katana. It may be that the idealistic qualities of transformation as born frees describe it has translated to an idealistic expectation by born frees of what is “in place”, and needed for transformation to be “executed”. This idealistic expectation is proof of born frees own “ignorance” Phathu’s statement from earlier about how a barrier to transformation is the “mismanagement and ignorance” of transformation from leaders. Although born frees insist that “we have everything in place” and that bad leadership and “mismanagement”, as put by Tumo earlier, majorly hampers the progress of the transformation process, they also recognise that their own behaviour contributes towards the lack of transformation. Born frees stress that part of the needed personal transformation is to take a more active role in leadership practices and addressing the discriminatory incidents and behaviours that born frees come into contact with.

Magda: Yeah, obviously like we just talked about the barriers, so we need to focus on overcoming them by being, taking control of those leadership roles within yourself and within your tiny little community. Just starting here, being the leadership roles we need in our country to take control. ... but we need to find that within ourselves obviously.

Magda explains that part of the solution to the leadership issues we face in South Africa is for the ordinary South African citizen, through personal transformation, to “take control” of “leadership roles” within themselves and their communities. This speaks to previous discussions about the poor practices of South African citizens and their unwillingness to lead a good example in the absence of good leadership. Magda highlights this argument, stating that “we need to find that within ourselves”. What this points to is that South African citizens need to find it within themselves to “lead by example”, as stated by Thendo, and in doing so “be the leadership roles we need in our country”.

Amanda: Start your own group, start where you can make a change, where you can say something about it. Like for example in my instance now, like next time if there is something I think I can do. You asked what can our generation do, I can start with myself, if I feel uncomfortable with something, a racist remark. I can open my mouth and I can say that's not really nice and why would you say that, or something like that. And then also, be the change, um if I want too not see racism being played out there then I shouldn't be racist.

Amanda expands on what it would mean to “be the leadership roles we need”. She states that you need to “be the change” in “your own group” and offers an example of racism to explain this. In order to change away from racism we need to firstly not be racist ourselves, but also we need to proactively combat racism within our own groups. Amanda also expands on what it could mean to “act out forgiveness” as mentioned by Thendo. The solution she offers is to actively call out racism in a “respectful manner” which links back to the responsibilities of being a good leader. Fullan (1991) points out that the role of leadership is to provide a non-threatening environment that allows for debate which echoes Amanda's suggestion to “talk about it”.

Amanda: We need to stop talking about it like this “makes whispering gesture”, or to your friend and say ag did you hear what this one just said, how racist can one be. Like open your mouth, I feel like next time I should just open my mouth, and in a respectful manner we should talk about it. Talk about your feelings, say listen that was maybe not necessary.

Born frees stress the importance of first transforming within themselves, and reaching a point where they have come to terms with and are addressing their own racial ways of being. Without this type of transformation they are unable to provide the needed leadership and guidance to “respectfully” address such issues in the wider community.

Katana: I say we'd change this space, I say were the ones that will question. That's how, I say we are the ones that will question things that will like put things into perspective, so I'm hopeful because we are doing that. That's what we are doing, were questioning, that's what we started off, we are questioning things, like things that were normalised for a long time, so were the type that's just like poking at questions, like huh uh is this really how it's supposed to be?

Katana identifies that their current role as born frees is to “question things” that have been “normalised for a long time”. This ties in with having that “basic understanding” of the “root cause” for transformation because you need it to identify what things have been “normalised for a long time”, and why they need to be questioned. Born frees state that their role in the transformative process is

to question current practices and to place pressure on political figures and leaders to become more responsible and accountable in their positions.

Born frees highlight that their role and responsibility within the collective and public sphere is to hold leaders and those who are in power accountable for their actions and their endeavours. They stress that born frees need to be socially active members of society so that they can lay the foundation for those who come after them to advance the transformation objective. Additionally, they discussed that part of this initiative is recognising that they are also responsible for embodying transformation and ensuring that they personally behave in ways that reflect the non-racial, equal, and harmonious values that they have internalised. They further identified that upbringing plays an extremely important role in the transformative process.

5.7 "Between hope and hopelessness": The attitudes of born frees toward transformation

Born free attitudes toward transformation ranged from “aggressively positive” to pessimistic, and in between. Born free with positive attitudes towards transformation based their attitudes on the availability, opportunity, and access to such opportunities in the present South African context. Their attitudes are based on their perception that the born free generation have an exciting future ahead of them.

Thendo: I can say the future of this generation is very bright based on the availability that is at their disposal. They can pick and choose, they can decide, they can go for whatever they want in life. There is no limitation, there is no barriers. Our generation is a fortunate generation, there is technology, education to some is free, NFSAS, there’s a lot of bursaries out there. So we can be who we want to be, this generation can go far when it comes to education. I would say my attitude is excited.

Keagan: My attitude for the born free future...hopeful. Yeah, I’d say hopeful.

Keanu: For me aggressively positive and then I suppose a true sense of free because of the unknown. So I feel free because literally anything can happen in the future of South Africa.

Despite the barriers to transformation and the complex multifaceted nature of transformation, born frees like Thendo hold on to the optimism underlying the born free ideal dream, and promises underlying the transformation objective. Born frees are “hopeful” and “aggressively positive”

because despite the negativities “literally anything can happen in the future of South Africa”. Other born free had negative attitudes towards transformation, stating that it could not be achieved in the current South African context and that as things stand, there is no future, let alone a transformed future, in South Africa. They felt that the transformative effort within the born free generation has plateaued, and cannot be achieved by them.

Tinus: for me uh, what I see it for in the future: negative. I don’t see a future in South Africa, that’s how I feel and sum it up. My experience as a born free, it’s tough because we have the wrong leadership in the country and the old mind set will never go. For that reason I don’t see a future in South Africa, for me personally. Uh, but will I be negative about trying to make a transformation, no. I will try my utmost best to help this country, and to raise the right children if I am still in the country with the right mind-set. But I don’t see a future for me here, no... One last thing, so I also think it could be, for me and how I see it. The way we are going, it’s a ticking time bomb, where I think something big will happen in South Africa. That’s what I feel and that’s the reason I’m saying there’s no future. So that it think there’s a ticking time-bomb and something is going to happen, yeah.

For Tinus the issues of “wrong leadership”, and the persistence of the “old mind set” leaves no future for transformation in South Africa. Rather he expresses that the current issues of poverty, inequality, corruption, and unrest are acting as a “ticking time-bomb” and its explosion according to Tinus, will not be good for the future of South Africa. Transformation as a “ticking time-bomb” ties in with the analogies of transformation as a wound that needs to be “debrided” or being a plaster covered cancer. All three of these refer to the issues of transformation as something needing immediate and focused attention.

Mostly born frees described their attitudes as being in between hope and hopelessness. They point out that they have hope for the ideal born free dream, and the achievement of the transformation utopia but that they are constantly faced with barriers to achieving this ideal. These barriers create a sense of hopelessness which is inescapable within the born free generation.

Keagan: My attitude is hopeful that there will be a better tomorrow but so far I can’t help but be disappointed.

Nduvho: I would say I am in between.

Eduan: My attitude is between hope and hopelessness. I think there is a lot of room for improvement. I think we can have a lot more purpose here than anywhere in the world, you know you can make a difference actually. There is a lot of room for opportunity, a lot of room for entrepreneurship, a lot of room for actually, you know going forward so I think that’s,

yeah where the hope and positive side comes in. but also I'm disappointed and feeling a bit like everything is moving too slowly towards sustainable and positive transformation. so I would say my attitude is a bit of both, it's like this, you know, this kind of sad reality and also this massive opportunity combined in one attitude.

Eduan expands on what it meant to be “between hope and hopelessness”. The hope stems from the potential South Africa has for “opportunity”, “entrepreneurship” and “going forward”. Some of that potential can also be seen in the research by Cho, et al. (2018) that highlights the enormous potential of drawing from different cultural sources in creating novel solutions for issues such as poverty. He also describes that the hopelessness stems from slow progress towards “sustainable and positive transformation”. This refers to the lack of emotional transformation in the South African society, the mismanagement of policy and resources by the South African government, and the persistent issues of poverty and inequality. This creates a “sad reality” and a “massive opportunity combined in one”. The hopelessness is further fed by the fact that born frees realise they need to start a change now, that they may not be able to enjoy in their lifetime. According to Eduan the commitment to transformation gets “personal” and you have to choose between “freedom and life” outside South Africa or commitment to transformation and “to continue to try and change” in South Africa. This links back to the fact that by trying to “steer the boat in another direction” born frees are essentially going “against the grain” of the current societal norms and that in and of itself creates a lot of “pressure” that born frees have to bare.

Eduan: That's the sad thing, we are the only people that have a chance of you know, successfully transforming the country, but you know it's just so hopeless, and you know it's not going to happen in your lifetime and it gets personal. Are you going to continue to try and change, steer the boat in another direction but you are sacrificing your own freedom and life.

Born frees describe a reality where they are burdened by the expectations and enigma of transformation as it was imagined by society after the fall of apartheid. They describe that instead of living in a country where they are free of the influence of apartheid and have greater potential and opportunity than the generations before them. Born frees live in a reality where issues of poverty, inequality, discrimination, and corruption accompanied by a legacy of apartheid binds them and denies them access to the freedoms they have been promised in the new constitution of South Africa. They describe the vision or definition of transformation is South Africa as representing an idealised utopia that is not a realistic representation of the mismanagement, poor leadership, and poor attitudinal relations rife within South African society. Instead, transformation in South Africa is described as being stuck in a cycle where the same issues are recycled instead of resolved. This creates

a state of stasis where transformation is unable to progress past the legal and structural dimensions. Furthermore, born frees believe that there is currently no clear plan for transformation, nor is there a long term strategic plan for achieving transformation in South Africa. The lack of an appropriate plan is further exasperated by mismanagement and poor leadership practices which have been focused on providing short term solutions for transformation issues without due consideration for long term objectives. Besides poor leadership practices and the lack of appropriate role models born frees identify poverty as one of the biggest barriers to transformation that South Africa has to face.

The born free vision of transformation is of a South African society that is truly equal. Where every member of society has food, shelter, education, and the ability to make a success of themselves. Born frees see transformation as a complete restructure and overhaul of South African society towards a more harmonious, inclusive, and equal way of life. They identify that the lack of cultural and emotional transformation which characterises the social structure of society as a major factor of contention. Born frees believe that many in South Africans lack a basic and mutual understanding of transformation and why it is needed in South Africa. They stress the importance of developing this understanding, not just through educational interventions but through personal commitments and endeavours. Born frees highlight that higher education has had a monumental impact in aiding them to develop a more critically active mind-set. In this regard they stress that higher education plays a very important role in the transformation initiative but currently the education system is not geared to adequately meet the needs of its students. They also highlight that currently higher education has helped born frees to become more aware of their circumstances and the need for transformation is society, but it has not helped them develop ways to practically address these issues.

The participants in this study emphasised that as born frees they have a responsibility to embrace and carry out the transformation into which they were born. This responsibility is even greater as they have had the privilege of receiving a higher education, an ideal of born-freeism which majority of the generation do not get to experience. They see themselves as the bridge between the older apartheid mind-set, and a new transformed way of being, thinking and relating to others. Born frees identify that transformation is an ideal and goal which they have internalised to some degree. Additionally born frees highlight the importance of upbringing not only in perpetuating old ways of being and thinking but in preventing those mind sets from being passed on to the next generation. Born frees see their responsibility as one where they need to start becoming active members of society that question leaders and hold those responsible accountable in their positions of power. Born frees conclude that when it comes to transformation, they aren't completely convinced of one perspective over the other. They have hope that transformation is possible and can be achieved but when they

take the complexity of transformation and the immense scale of the issues that transformation has to address into account, they do not feel that it can be achieved.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1. Introduction

The following chapter gives an overview of the findings of this research study and how those findings contribute towards answering the research questions and achieving the objectives of this study. This study attempts to identify the ways in which born frees in the sphere of higher education construct transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. This chapter offers an integration and discussion of the findings of this study per research question. The barriers and possible solutions towards transformation as identified by the born free generation are discussed. Thereafter, born free attitudes towards the idea and practice of transformation in the South African context is discussed.

6.2. Integration and discussion of themes per research question

Born frees define transformation as a change towards an improved state of being, be it on a personal level, or on a wider societal or economic level. Within the South African context transformation is defined in terms of the history of South Africa, and represents South Africa's change from the apartheid regime to a democratic dispensation. The democratic government committed itself to transforming the racialized social and economic structure inherited from apartheid through the institutionalisation of a new social order that set out to redress these inequalities through the democratic values of equality, freedom and human dignity (Badat, 2010). A new constitution was put in place with the aim to heal the divisions of the past through establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The new constitution of South Africa lay the foundation for an open, equal and democratic society with the greater aim of freeing the potential, and improving the quality of life for each citizen of South Africa (Msila, 2007). It's institution initiated the provision of basic resources such as education, housing, water, and healthcare, to black South Africans who were denied these services in the apartheid past (Martens, 2007). Transformation is further defined as the implementation and practice of the change away from the apartheid past and towards equality in the present democratic society.

As the first generation born and raised into this new system, born frees weave their understanding of transformation into their understanding of what it means to be a born free. Being born free is associated with being born and raised after apartheid, and therefore free of the oppression and discrimination of that regime. The new South African Constitution and its underlying values of

equality in the form of equal rights, lack of discrimination, and equal access and opportunity, were all described as forming part of what it meant to be born free. To the participants in this study, being born free meant being free from the apartheid past and its influence. It meant living at a time and in a country where they have more choice and potential to succeed than their parents or grand-parent's generations. To be a born free is a privilege. Receiving quality education and access to higher education are prominent features in descriptions of what it means to be a born free. It also means living in a world that strives towards equality, where there is no discrimination or limitations for people based on the colour of their skin, and where everyone in South Africa has the same foundation, access, and opportunities from which they are able to build their lives. Because of that, born frees have the freedom to choose their path in life, and have access to achieving these choices in terms of what they can study, where they can work, and where they can live. This encompasses what one participant termed "born-freeism" or the "born free ideal dream". Born-freeism represents the ideal of moving away from the Apartheid past, and embracing the new South Africa, its constitutions, values and transformation. According to this ideal, being born free means being born free of the chains of apartheid, it means having greater freedom, access, opportunity and choice than the previous generation. It means growing and living in a non-discriminant, equal society with greater potential to achieve, and succeed in the change and transformation set out by the new Constitution of South Africa. Being a born free is a privilege and the ideal born free experience is one of integration and equality among the different races and cultures in South Africa, where everyone has the same foundation, access, choice, and opportunity to succeed in life. They further emphasise that transformation as it has been defined and idealised represents a utopia. In this utopia born frees are "free of the burdens of the past, to be free of racial, political and economic prejudice and to flourish in a country which offers them so much" (Malila, 2013, p. 5), and are described as the "vanguard" of the democratic revolution, having "taken up the struggles of a new generation" in pursuit of building "a South Africa free of racism, of sexism, of xenophobia and other forms of discrimination" (The Presidency, 2019).

According to born frees the intent of transformation is to create a fair and equal dispensation where the basic needs of South Africans are met, and all South Africans have equal access to, and opportunities for, success in their lives. The aim of transformation in South Africa is to create a system and a society that is in harmony with one another, where there is fairness, equality, and no discrimination. Where everyone has an equal foundation and opportunities from which they are fed, housed, educated, and employed. Born frees recognise that this type of transformation is not a simple process, rather they stress the complexity of the transformative process and the extent to which change needs to spread through different facets of society in order for transformation to be successful.

Born frees recognise that achieving transformation in South Africa involves a complex and multifaceted change process that may not be realistically achievable. They emphasise that true transformation involves change on an emotional and metaphysical level where the values and goals of transformation are internalised and embraced on an individual, psychological level. Transformation involves multiple levels of change including; educational change, social change, change in spatial planning perspectives, and economic change, that affect not only individual citizens, but the wider South African society. Born frees conclude that for transformation to be truly successful it needs to not only occur in external societal structures but it also needs to occur in practice on a more individual level. In this regards, born frees reflect research findings by Brynard (2007) and Sooklal (2006) that successful transformation requires change on a structural and cultural level. Involving change in the way time, space, roles, and relationships are used, as well as cultural change of social values, norms and beliefs in line with the change agenda.

6.3 The barriers to transformation:

Similar to findings by Norgaard (2015), born frees highlight that the ideal of transformation creates unfair expectations of the born free lived experience, and what they would ultimately be able to achieve in terms of transformation and reducing conditions of poverty, inequality, and violence in South Africa. Born frees point out that the utopia of transformation has not been achieved in the current South African society and that born-freeism is a luxury enjoyed by few in the generation. Instead, the transformation ideal has created unrealistic expectations of the born free generation and born frees feel pressured to live up to these expectations. What it means to be a born free is to try and live up to this ideal in a reality where they are not yet completely free of the influence of apartheid. Despite their legal freedom from apartheid, born frees emphasise that their reality is one where South African society, and by association born frees, are still bound by the chains of apartheid (Cronje & Kane-Berman, 2015).

Born frees note the continuance of racism and the apartheid mind-set in their everyday interactions and experiences. The racism and discriminatory mind-set of the apartheid regime still persists in the apartheid generation. Some born frees adopt this socialisation from their parents, carrying it on in present day South African society. They further note that factors such as poverty, poor education, unemployment, inequality, corruption, and poor leadership make it very difficult for born frees to live up to the expectations created by the born-freeism ideal.

6.3.1 Transformation in action: the issue of structural transformation without accompanying cultural transformation

For the born free generation transformation in South Africa so far has been structural and the New Constitution of South Africa plays a significant role in that transformation. It forms the legal and policy foundation for the transformation objective and paves the way for the freedom, equality, access, choice and opportunities that born frees associate with transformation today. But, these changes do not encompass transformation in its entirety. Born frees highlight that despite transformation having occurred on a legal and policy level, this transformation has not extended to the practices or actions of South Africans. They identify a dire need a cultural transformation within the South African society. There is much in the current South African context, such as poverty, inequality, corruption, and unemployment that needs to change before transformation can be successfully achieved. These do not simply go away once identified and addressed in legislation. They are issues that need to be actively addressed in practice by individuals and the collective society in order to be overcome. The lack of cultural transformation within the South African society has contributed to a repetitive transformative experience where issues of poverty, inequality, discrimination, and unemployment keep recycling themselves. This echoes findings by Sooklal (2006) that structural changes without accompanying and complimentary cultural changes do not produce the intended results of transformation. The lack of cultural change in turn creates resistance to the transformative process, and prevents successful change from being achieved. Thus creating a cycle of transformative structural change that is impeded by issues stemming from an un-transformative culture. Born frees suggest a number of barriers that need to be overcome in order to break this cycle and move towards true transformation. Poverty, unemployment, poor leadership, discrimination, a culture of instant gratification, and lack of a long term vision were all identified as barriers to transformation. These barriers are linked and interact with one another.

Born frees identify that the need for cultural transformation stems predominantly from older generation South Africans. The pre-democracy generations in South Africa have not completely let go of the old apartheid mind-set and because of this the legacy of apartheid is reified in the present democratic context. Through parenting this reification is passed on to the born free generation and sub-consciously predisposes them to these historical and discriminatory ways of being and thinking. Within the political sphere, this reification can be seen in the patterns of racial division that continue to characterise the construction of socio-political life in post-apartheid South Africa (Steyn Kotze & Prevost, 2016). Whether from their direct family, or their wider social context, born frees stress that they are not free of the influence, discrimination, and racism that characterised the Apartheid past.

6.3.2 Issues of poor leadership, management, defining and planning of transformation and its initiatives:

Born frees note that although the goals of transformation are defined in the New Constitution of South Africa, there exists no distinct definition of transformation nor a structured plan for achieving transformation. Born frees point out that poor leadership practices such as corruption, ignorance and mismanagement significantly contribute towards the lack of vision, definition, and plan for transformation moving forward. Poor political and leadership practices in South Africa has left the born free generation without quality role models and appropriate guidance. The lack of quality role models and guidance acts as another barrier to transformation because in light of the absence of a clear definition or plan for transformation, born frees will mentorship to motivate and direct them towards achieving transformation.

Furthermore, born frees identify that the conditions of poverty that affect majority of the South African population creates a culture of instant gratification that is not conducive to the transformation process. These conditions lead people to be more inclined towards short term solutions that meet their immediate needs. The need to meet immediate needs leaves people less inclined to invest in long term solutions where there may be a delay before their needs are met. The conditions of poverty, unemployment, and a culture of instant gratification creates a social culture whereby a long term plans and investment are seen as a luxury and not really important. In turn, there is no agreed upon static vision for transformation, only an idealised concept.

6.4 Suggested solutions to barriers of transformation

According to born frees the lack of cultural transformation within South African society is the biggest barrier to successful and true transformation. Critical to the need for emotional or cultural transformation is understanding the root cause for transformation and why cultural change is needed to fully realise transformation objectives in South Africa. The legacy of colonialism and its lasting social and economic effects on current South African society is what can be referred to as the “root cause” for transformation. The attitudes, norms, values, and beliefs that underlie current South African culture has been heavily informed by the legacy of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa. For transformation to be successful South Africans need to recognise the impact of colonialism and apartheid on South African society, to critically engage with that knowledge, and identify how they may be contributing to or legitimizing the legacy of apartheid within current South African social and

economic structures. Through doing this the underlying attitudes, norms, values, and beliefs of the South African society that is currently shaped by the legacy of colonialism should transform and “true transformation” will be achieved. Without this type of transformation, born frees agree that transformation as it is idealised would not be achievable. Additionally they point out the complexities and interconnectedness of the barriers to transformation and identify that overcoming these barriers involves solutions that are just as complex and interconnected. Born frees stress the fact that transformation is something that will take time, it is not likely to occur in one generation. Time is needed to tackle various barriers and issues before the transformative process can move forward.

6.4.1 Reconciliation: learning, understanding, and accepting the role of colonialism and apartheid in the root cause for transformation.

Many South Africans do not understand the difference between structural and cultural transformation nor do they recognise the need for emotional transformation. This lack of understanding and recognition of the root cause for transformation is in part due to a lack of knowledge, and in part due to wilful blindness. Born frees point out that true transformation will only be achieved when South Africans as individuals actively embrace and identify with the transformation agenda. In order to do this South Africans need to reconcile with the apartheid and colonial past and develop a basic understanding of the root cause for transformation.

6.4.2 The power of education as an overarching solution to barriers of transformation:

Born frees identify that quality formal and informal education as fundamental in developing citizens who understand the root cause for transformation, can make informed decisions, and responsibly exercise their democratic rights. Born frees that that issues of poor leadership will not end unless society starts making well informed and responsible decisions regarding the leaders they choose. Education increases people’s chances for success, and in this way contributes towards decreasing levels of poverty and unemployment. It opens the doors to critical thinking and awareness, and carries the potential to stave the growth and influence of the legacy of the apartheid and the colonial past on the current and upcoming South African generations. Unfortunately, born frees note that in their opinion the current curriculum and methods of teaching at formal institutes of education are not sufficient. Not only do they not adequately prepare and equip students for life after school but there

is also not enough attention given to the development of a basic understanding of the root cause for transformation or achieving cultural transformation within the educative context.

Born frees call for a more concise plan and strategy for transformation at institutes of higher education. This includes not only a plan for achieving successful transformation within the institutes themselves, but also continuing transformation within the larger South African context. They highlight that their experience within the context of higher education has undoubtedly contributed towards their own personal transformation and in this regard, there is much to be said about the successes of transformative efforts at institutes of higher education. But they also stress that there is still a need for further transformation within the context of higher education. The needed transformation extends to not only a curriculum transformation that is more practical and focused to the specific needs of South Africans. It also includes a cultural transformation within the power and political structures of the university context. Born frees believe that higher education plays a pivotal role in the transformation process. Especially when it comes to directing efforts of transformation in new directions and equipping fellow South Africans with the necessary skills to address these issues. In this regard born frees call for a complete overhaul of the higher education system involving a change in the structure, power dynamics, and political motivations of institutions.

6.4.3 Personal agency: proactive efforts towards achieving transformation

Born frees also identify that it is their responsibility to proactively continue the change and transformation towards a non-discriminant, equal, and just society. Born frees recognise that being part of the born free generation places them in a position where they have to act as a generational bridge between old discriminatory ways of thinking and being and new inclusive ways of thinking and being. Born frees note that it is their responsibility to carry on the change and transformation into which they were born and that this responsibility in and of itself is not easy. The responsibility to embody and continue to build the new South Africa through personal transformation is a goal intrinsic to the born free generation and not entirely imposed on them from external expectations. To achieve this it is their responsibility to be educated and knowledgeable about the apartheid past and its current influence. Good quality formal and informal education is seen as an overarching solution to these issues. Education is not seen as the sole solution to issues of transformation, but rather serves as a foundation from which other solutions build. The responsibility to be educated further extends to a responsibility to use this knowledge, education, and awareness to self-transform and become living embodiments of the change they want to see. Additionally, born frees emphasise the importance of

upbringing and the influence that their personal transformation will have on raising children with a mind-set removed from the apartheid past.

Born frees strive towards achieving a non-racist rainbow nation. This study did not set out to investigate a diversity ideologies, or to interpret data according to polyculturalism or the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity. Instead, they were explored to show that cultural change, especially in a diverse context such as South Africa, is an extremely complex process and occurs over time in phases. It involves stages of shifting worldviews heavily laden with cognitive dissonance and identity forming. This is specifically highlighted in the born free experience at university. Born frees express that when they first awaked, or became more aware of the apartheid past and the issue of transformation in South Africa, many experienced an identity crisis which to a degree diminished the racial and cultural harmony they were able to achieve during primary and secondary education. Although elements of wilful blindness can be identified in the data of this study born frees express a desire and willingness to become more interracially symbiotic. To “understand”, “grow” and “act differently” not just from the apartheid past, but from the unequal and discriminatory circumstances within the current South African context. In this regard born frees highlight that they believe it is their personal responsibility to become more interculturally sensitive and do so through continuous self-reflection.

6.5 Born free attitudes toward transformation:

Born frees describe their attitudes towards transformation in South Africa as being between hope and hopelessness. Born frees have hope that the ideals of transformation and born freeism can be achieved in South Africa. Born frees place their hope in the freedom, equality, and access provided by the new Constitution of South Africa. Born frees also place some of their hope on themselves and their own generation. They believe that because their lived experience is within the transformed system, and their mind-sets differ from that of their parents or the older generation, they still carry the potential to contribute towards successful transformation through the upbringing of their own children. Born frees identify many positives within their lived experience, which shows them potential and gives them hope for a truly transformed South Africa. They agree that the born free ideal dream and the utopia that is transformation will not be achieved in a single born free generation but rather over several subsequent generations. Born frees note that the transformative process has already begun, and although we may slow its progress, we cannot stop it from happening in the long run. Born frees also note that although it may take several generations to successfully and completely implement

transformation, it took a single born free generation to unequivocally initiate an inevitable transformation within the South African society.

Born frees point out that their reality is one where the transformation and born free ideals are blocked by several barriers that are complex and interconnected within the South African society. They point out that the sheer complexity and scale of the barriers to transformation creates a sense of hopelessness. Born frees live in a reality that is not conducive to achieving transformation, and born frees currently occupy a strata in society and in life where they are yet to come into a position where they have the power to influence or eradicate these barriers to transformation. This sense of powerlessness also contributes to the hopeless quality of their attitudes. Born frees describe living in a reality that is extremely conflicting. On the one hand born frees live in a South Africa where they have more legal freedom, access, opportunity, and equality than ever before. They have less limitations and access to better support systems than the generation before them. Born frees live in a multicultural world, one that is more open-minded, accepting and equal than in the past. Born frees express that it is a joy and privilege to have such an experience but they point out that there is a generational gap in this experience. This generational gap has led to the stagnation of transformation in South Africa according to the born free generation.

The apartheid narrative is still used in various different facets of South African politics and society. Born frees feel that this narrative, of us versus them, is distracting from our efforts to tackle more pressing issues such as poverty, poor education, and unemployment which affect, and will benefit all South Africans. Further born frees point out that the present day culture of greed, corruption, and instant gratification creates a difficult environment in which to achieve and succeed in the long term. Many born free feel there is no future for them in South Africa. But despite these feelings they still see a lot of potential and opportunity for South Africa, and for themselves in South Africa. They just recognise that without another major change, the potential and opportunities that born frees place their hope in will be spoiled.

All in all born free attitudes towards transformation can be summed up in the following statement:

P: For the past 27 years there's been a lot of transformation and change, but I feel like right now we need another bigger change. We acknowledge the change that's happened over the last 27 years, but we feel like now is when we actually need, you know, like the bigger punch.

We have successfully moved on from Apartheid and raised a generation within this new system. Born frees now want to focus on moving away from the politics and mind-set of the past towards the vision provided by the new constitution of South Africa. Born frees stress the importance of being educated and knowledgeable about the Apartheid past, to be critical in their understanding of it and how it

affects our present day South African society. Born frees indicate that the previous generations attitudes and mind-sets are still rooted in the apartheid socialisation. They stress the importance of addressing these factors but they also stress the importance of accepting the past and moving away from it towards a new, better vision.

6.6 Limitations and contributions

The limitations of this study are that the results from this study are not generalizable to the whole born free generation but rather represent a glimpse or limited perspective of the phenomenon under study. This limit is very evident by the small number of participants sourced from the context of higher education. And thus views the phenomenon through a lens of limited perspectives. Not just from me as a researcher but also from my participants who represent a very small portion of the overall born free generation. As they pointed out themselves. They are representative of the minority of born frees who are privileged enough to have experienced and had access to the ideal experience of higher education. An additional limitation of this study extends from the use of hermeneutic phenomenology and reflexivity in the interpretation of results. The results of this study are organised according to my understanding and the analysis in turn influenced by my own worldview. Because of this, the findings of this study do not represent an objective reality but rather provides a snapshot of the underling social and psychological factors that contribute towards born free understanding of transformation as I perceive it.

The contributions of this study extends from its complex topic. Transformation has been a popular and contested topic of research but as identified in my literature review. Despite a plethora of research on the born free generation and the achievements of transformation thus far. In light of this, very little research and effort has been made towards studying the underlying social culture of the born free generation and how they understand and see transformation in South Africa. In this regard, this study contributes toward this limited body of knowledge by giving voice to the experiences and thoughts of the born free generation and identifying how they conceptualise and give meaning to transformation. By identifying the underlying attitudes of born frees towards transformation, this study also has the potential to contribute towards and inform future policy efforts of reculturation. This study has provided greater clarity on born free constructions of, and attitude towards transformation offering a glimpse into the underlying culture with which they meet transformation. It has further expanded on the transformative barriers currently experienced by born frees and their suggested solutions.

6.7 Directions for future research

Future research efforts should focus on effective methods of reculturation that are inter-culturally sensitive and have integrated indigenous African knowledge systems into their planning and construction. This includes identifying methods of increasing the development of intercultural sensitivity through educational policy, programmes, and curriculum change.

Furthermore, research should focus on the development of a clear definition of transformation and a thorough, realistic plan for achieving it. Many born free note the idealistic qualities of transformation and born freeism create unrealistic expectations of not only the born free generation but of what transformation in South Africa can achieve. In this regard, it would be valuable to develop a realistic conceptualisation of transformation, how it will be done and how long it will take.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Participant Information Letter

Project Title: Born free students' attitudes of transformation in post-apartheid South Africa.

Affiliation: University of Pretoria

Researcher: Anika De Lange

Cell No: 079 218 4316

Email: u13097492@tuks.co.za

Supervisor: Dr. Sabrina Liccardo

Tel No: 012 420 4935

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Two and a half decades after the end of Apartheid, born frees represent the first generation of South African university students to grow up under democratic rule (John, et al., 2015). Because of this, they are viewed as being uniquely positioned in the socio-historical context of South Africa (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2018). According to Mattes (2012), unlike their parents, born frees receive a reformed education without major incidents of political interruption. Born frees have enjoyed being raised in an economy with a speedily growing middle class, as well as a reforming social culture (John, et al., 2015).

Born frees “are expected to be free of the burdens of the past, to be free of racial, political and economic prejudice and to flourish in a country which offers them so much” (Malila, 2013, p. 5). The democratic system is expected to provide for all the needs of the born free generation in order to succeed, especially education (Malila, 2013). This is further supported by the Presidential youth day speech, which emphasises that through education the government commits to providing South African youth “with all the opportunities possible to enable them to reach their potential” (The Presidency, 2019). South African youths are described as the “vanguard” of the democratic revolution, having “taken up the struggles of a new generation” in pursuit of building “a South Africa free of racism, of sexism, of xenophobia and other forms of discrimination” (The Presidency, 2019).

According to the inequality trends in South Africa released by Statistics South Africa (2019), South Africa is known as one of the most unequal countries in the world. The South African Labour market is plagued not only by bad employment outcomes, but also by racialized inequality of earning distributions. Black Africans still receive lower wages than their white counterparts, because of this the labour market is still one of the largest contributors towards

income inequality at 74.2%. (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Although South Africans have enjoyed a speedily growing black middle class since the end of apartheid, they face an ever increasing official unemployment rate, and the bottom 60% of households are completely dependent on social grants to survive (Statistics South Africa, 2019). The democratic government struggles to provide adequate education and vocational training, as well as entrepreneurial encouragement and access to labour markets for majority of South African citizens (Cronje, et al., 2015). Due majorly to AIDS, some 3.24 million born frees are orphans having lost either one or both of their parents (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Born frees are born into one of the world's most violent societies not at war, at any one time up to 45 000 born frees are in prison (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Even though, they have no direct experience of apartheid, their lived experience is one of persistent inequality within a democratic system (John, et al., 2015).

The born free generation have to contend with not only a brutal past, but an uncertain future characterised by an insistent continuation of poverty, inequality, and violence (Burns, et al., 2015). Because of this “the expectations and burdens placed on born frees—by parents, community leaders, and society, not to mention international observers—raise unfair expectations about both the homogeneity of the generation's attitudes and lived experiences and the likelihood that this generation will exert agency in any one predictable way” (Norgaard, 2015, p. 44).

This study is interested in exploring the attitudes of born frees, asking what their attitudes are and how these attitudes relate to the concept of transformation. Attitudes are important as they influence how we view the world, what we think, and what we do. They form a readily available affective and cognitive bases to which we refer to inform our behaviours. The context in which a person experiences and understands reality is of vital importance because it forms the basis for a person's worldview and therefore, contributes to shaping their understanding, opinions, and attitudes of life (Parker, 1998). Born frees are viewed as being uniquely positioned in the socio-historical context of South Africa, as they are the first generation of South African children born into a democratic system (Lundgren & Scheckle, 2018). They have grown up in a political and social structure attempting to adopt and live out transformative policies (Finchilescu, et al., 2007). A better understanding of the current attitudes of born frees towards transformation can expand researchers understanding of the current transformative (and un-transformative) environment.

In order to conduct this study the data collection method of focus groups will be used to conduct critical discussions about transformation with participants of the born free generation, who are defined as being born in or between the years 1994 and 2000. This study takes an online approach to conducting these focus groups. In an online focus group, participants are not required to meet at a central location, rather the focus group is conducted on an online platform allowing for participants to access from any location provided they have the necessary facilities. Online focus groups, making use of web-based video/audio programmes enable the researcher to collect large amounts of information, with relative ease, in a short period of time, while still retaining the essential quality of the focus group method. Focus group discussions will be recorded for transcription and data analysis purposes. A participant review of the analysed data, where participants review the data to ensure that the essence of discussions were appropriately captured, will also be conducted.

In order to collect the type of rich data required to answer the questions of this study the sample for this study consists of “bona fide” groups. A bona fide group can be described as a social group that also exists outside of the study context, is open to new people, and has stable connections (Putnam & Stohl, 1990). In order to identify bona fide groups this study employs a method of snowball sampling which requires participants to refer other potential participants for the study.

Although there are no immediate benefits for participating in this study, it will give participants the opportunity to share their thoughts and beliefs, and contribute towards a better understanding of the born-free generation. Participation in this study is completely voluntary, you may withdraw at any point. There are no consequences should you choose to leave at any time, and if necessary the aid of a registered counsellor can be provided upon request. Participation in this study is kept as anonymous and confidential as possible, real names of participants will not be used beyond sampling purposes, are security protected, and changed. The data gathered for this project will further, be securely stored for 15 years in the University of Pretoria archives and may be used for future research purposes.

Participant requirements:

Required participants need to be a South African citizens, born in, or between, the years of 1994 and 2000, and registered students at a university.

Participants are required to suggest other potential participants for the study. The focus group discussions for this study will require 1-2 hours of participant's time as well as a post focus group review of the collected and analysed data from discussions.

For any further questions, or information, please feel free to contact me, Anika De Lange, through my email provided at the top of this page. I look forward to working with you.



.....
Anika De Lange

(Adapted from Brown, 2009)

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Affiliation: University of Pretoria

Researcher: Anika De Lange

Supervisor: Dr. Sabrina Liccardo

Cell No: 079 218 4316

Tel No: 012 420 4935

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u13097492@tuks.co.za

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Agreeing to participate in this study, you agree to partake in a focus group interview, where your responses will be voice recorded and the data transcribed anonymously. Please read the following and sign the consent form if you agree;

I understand that:

- My participation in this study is voluntary; that means I do not have to answer questions I do not want to, and I may withdraw my participation at any time.
- That I am required to suggest other potential participants for this study.
- The group discussions are aimed at soliciting my honest opinion, and because of this, there are no right or wrong answers in this study.
- To participate in this study, approximately 2 hours of my time will be needed.
- I am encouraged to answer openly, and honestly. My honesty is appreciated and my opinions respected. There is no judgement involved in this study.
- This study will be conducted using online video streaming platform, and I will need the necessary equipment (internet connection, camera, microphone, cell phone or laptop) to participate.
- My answers will be recorded, and stored on the researcher's private computer to be transcribed.
- All information that is personal to me will be protected and remain anonymous, recorded data will be transcribed and I will be given pseudonym instead of my real name.
- I understand that there are no direct benefits to partaking in this research besides the expansion of my own knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- The research will be done in accordance with all relevant policies of the University of Pretoria.
- All data will be stored for 15 years and may be used for future research.

- All researchers involved in the study will apply ethical practices in every aspect possible in using human participants for research, from the point of inception to the point of publishing the results. For more information on the study, I am welcome to contact my researcher at any point.
- There are no direct risks of this research, but the possibility that the topic under study may make me uncomfortable or cause emotional stress, remains. Thus, a registered counsellor's services can be requested if I need it.
- The research has not begun without ethical approval.

I _____ (name and surname) consent to participating in a focus group study conducted by Anika De Lange (the researcher) and approve the use of the audiotape recorder during the interview discussion. I also consent to the use of my responses, in an anonymous manner, in this research study and possible future research outputs.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Focus Group Questions

Demographic Information

Age:

Gender:

'Race':

Degree:

Introduction/Ice-breaker

Hello everyone, I hope you are well today. My name is Anika, and I will be conducting this group discussion today. Our discussions today will revolve around the concept of transformation, what we think it is, how we feel about it and whether we think it has been achieved. This group aims to be a safe, judgement free zone. You are here to honestly share your opinions, and experiences, without fear or discomfort.

Because we are on an online platform I would like to just set out a few guidelines that will help with the process. If everybody could mute their microphones this would be much appreciated, it lessens background noise so that we can hear the speaker clearly. When you do want to speak, please indicate to the camera by raising your hand, wait to be acknowledged, and unmute your microphone. Once you have given your answer please indicate that you are done. Everybody will get a chance to speak, your opinions and answers during this discussion are very valuable and I encourage you to engage with the topic. These guidelines may seem a bit restrictive but they are designed to allow every person a fair chance to be heard fully without interruption.

Thank you very much for being here today, not only do I appreciate it but what you share today will play a critical role in bringing light to our generation, and creating a better understanding of who, what and how we are. The questions for this study are all situated within the South African context and they are specifically looking for answers that draw from your unique experience as a born free South African. You are free to leave at any time as participation is voluntary. This means that if ever you feel uncomfortable or if you no longer want to participate you are free to leave no strings attached. If you do decide to leave, I kindly ask that you communicate with me afterwards to ensure all is well. So to get the ball rolling in this discussion, I would like each of you to give a short introduction of yourselves. In this introduction I would like you to include two things. What you believe makes you unique, and what South African phenomenon do you find funny. This introduction is just meant to break the ice, and get us all a bit more comfortable with each other.

I will start the process: Hi my name is Anika, I am 26 years old and I'm a crazy cat lady. Something that makes me unique is my dark sense of humour, and I still giggle at the thought of South Africans causing a toilet paper panic at the beginning of lockdown.

A. Opening and Supplementary Questions:

1. *Who are the born free generation to you?*
 - a. *What does being part of the born free generation mean to you?*
2. *What does transformation mean to you?*
3. *What is your experience of transformation as a born free?*
 - a. *What values would you say reflect your experience of transformation?*
 - b. *Do these values something you embrace as part of your identity?*
4. *Do you think transformation has contributed towards achieving the values, of democracy, social justice, non-racism, equality and reconciliation?*
 - a. *Why?*
 - b. *What are your personal beliefs about these values?*

5. *Do you feel transformation has been achieved and why?*
 - a. *In your opinion what factors aid and hinder the process of transformation?*

Appendix D: Permission from Faculty Ethics



Faculty of Humanities

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo



19 January 2021

Dear Ms A de Lange

Project Title: Born free students' attitudes towards diversity, social integration, and social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa.
Researcher: Ms A de Lange
Supervisor(s): Dr SL Liccardo
Department: Psychology
Reference number: 13097492 (HUM014/1119) (Amendment)
Degree: Masters

Thank you for the application to amend the existing protocol that was previously approved by the Committee.

The revised / additional documents were reviewed and **approved** on 19 January 2021 along these guidelines, further data collection may therefore commence (where necessary).

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the amended proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with

the project. Sincerely,



Prof Innocent Pikirayi
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate Studies and Research
Ethics Faculty of Humanities
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