Pushing the bounds of possibility: South African academics narrate their experiences of having agency to effect transformation

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Abstract

Over 20 years after the first democratic elections, the institutional cultures and structures of many South African universities remain un-transformed; they are embedded with racist and sexist discourses and attitudes that allow for the marginalisation and exclusion of students and staff (Department of Education 2008; Soudien 2010; van Wyk and Alexander 2010; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Hemson and Singh 2010). In order to effect change, research has noted the importance of leadership and staff involvement in the transformation process (Van-Der Westhuizen 2006; Portnoi 2009; Niemann 2010; Viljoen and Rothmann 2002). These studies argue that both leaders and staff members must be interested, and actively involved in, the transformation process. This suggests that the extent to which leaders and individual staff members have agency to effect transformatory practices determines the success of transformation policies. But what motivates this interest in transformation? While a number of studies have focused on the imperative to transform, few studies have focused on the role of individual agency in the transformation process. After all the world and in some ways structural properties are given to us and at the same time 'actively constituted by us' (van Manen 1997, XI). Drawing on interviews with academic staff members at one university in South Africa, this study uses a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understand the nature of having agency to enable transformation drawing on the experiences of academic staff members. In the context of studies on the agency-structure divide and the need for a structural and cultural change in universities in South Africa, the project aimed to find out how transformation happens, when it does happen. I was interested in how individual agents are able to use their agency to ensure transformation amid limiting and rigid structures and cultures in the university. Given the fact that structures are only revealed in human action, the individual experience of transformation at once gives insight into the dominant structures, the social context and how their capacity to act was deployed to enable a change in such structures – at least in their own experience and understanding. This may help our understanding of transformation and what is needed to effect the transformation of deeply embedded apartheid legacies in university structures and cultures. This study aimed to reveal moments at which individuals embedded in what have been identified as rigid structures and cultures perceive themselves as having had the agency to interrupt and transform them despite their rigid nature. The study was interested in what characterises these moments and what individual and institutional contexts make them more or less possible/likely.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CHE:	Council on Higher Education
CHERTL:	Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning
CAQDAS:	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CE:	Community Engagement
CHET:	Center for Higher Education Transformation
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE:	Department of Education
HE:	Higher Education
HELTA:	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association
HEQC:	Higher Education Quality Committee
HBU:	Historically Black Universities
HP:	Hermeneutic Phenomenology
HPA:	Hermeneutic Phenomenology Analysis
HWU:	Historically White Universities
MCTHEI:	Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions
MoE:	Ministry of Education
NASFAS:	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NDP:	National Department of Education
NCHE:	National Commission on Higher Education
NPHE:	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF:	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Authority
SARChi:	South African Research Chairs Initiative
SFA:	Society for Female Academics[1]
RU:	Rhodes University

[1] The Society for Female Academics (SFA) was created in 2004 in partial response to the masculinised institutional culture and culture of alienation prevalent in the institution (see Knowles 2010, 23). The SFA is a pseudonym for the group at the institution.

TMSA:	Transformational Model of Human Activity
UCT:	University of Cape Town
UFH:	University of Fort Hare
UKZN:	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UL:	University of Limpopo
UNISA:	University of South Africa
UP:	University of Pretoria
WSU:	Walter Sisulu University
WITS:	University of Witswatersrand

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1 Chapter

1.1 Background and Context

The lack of transformation in South Africa questions the idea of it being a Rainbow Nation. Over 20 years after the first democratic elections, many South African universities are un-transformed, they are embedded with racist and sexist discourses and attitudes that allow for the marginalisation and exclusion of students and staff. In February 2008, a video – which came to be known as the 'Reitz video' -- was made by a group of four White male students at the University of the Free State that showed the students forcing some support (cleaning) staff at the University to eat food that one of the students had apparently urinated in. The video went viral causing outrage throughout the country (DoE 2008). Importantly, it raised questions about the practices, cultures and structures that were enabling such forms of blatant discrimination at universities. Following the Reitz video incident, the then Minister of Education established a committee to 'investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions,' commonly known as the 'Soudien Commission' (DoE 2008). While the report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination MCTHEI, noted some progress regarding transformation, it noted too little progress on a structural level as deeply embedded legacies of apartheid ensured the persistence of inequalities and resistance to change (DoE 2008; Soudien 2010; see also Portnoi 2009; Niemann 2010, 1003; van Wyk 2004, 168; Cassim 2006, 424; Hemson and Singh 2010; Msibi 2013, 71; Munyuki 2015; Walker 2005).

Similarly, the recent rise in student movements and protests across universities in South Africa with themes like #RhodesMustFall, #RhodesSoWhite, #FeesMustFall is indicative of this lack of structural transformation and the pervasiveness of racism and inequality especially in historically white universities (Ngcoboci 2015). On the 21st of October 2015, thousands of students gathered in universities across the nation in solidarity against the increase of fees (Shutting down the Rainbow Nation: #FeesMustFall[2]). Among the demands were the need to transform especially historically white institutions given the slow pace at which institutional cultures and structures are changing (Shutting down the Rainbow Nation: #FeesMustFall). The protests are an indication of the inequalities and exclusionary structures prevalent in South African universities.

[2] Find video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksqrJvOrd7A

The legacy of apartheid has ensured deeply entrenched discriminatory racist and sexist structures in most institutions in South Africa (DoE 2008; Soudien 2010; van Wyk and Alexander 2010; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Hemson and Singh 2010). This gave rise to the need to transform society on multiple levels, including structural, institutional and inter-personal. Universities are one such site of transformation (DoE 2008; Soudien 2010; van Wyk and Alexander 2010; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Hemson and Singh 2010). The institutional cultures of many historically white universities in South Africa have been said to be 'White' and/or 'male' in character which poses a difficult challenge to the transformation imperative (Steyn and Van Zyl 2011; Cassim 2006; Portnoi 2009). While transformation on a demographic level is integral to the need to restructure and transform higher education, a complete transformation requires a total overhaul of those structures and cultures that promote discrimination and allow for the persistence of attitudes and practices that perpetuate the marginalisation of some and advantage others (Badat 2013; Waghid 2002; Govinder, Zondo and Makoba 2013; Msibi 2013; Munyuki 2015). In a historically white South African University where the norm is predominantly White and male (Jagarnath 2015), it may be especially difficult to change such structures and cultures and rid them of exclusionary racist and sexist mores. Fourie (1999, 277) argues that the transformation of such structures means the development of a new culture and shared values, not just demographic change. Educational White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, encapsulates this imperative:

> South Africa's transition from apartheid and minority rule to democracy requires that all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era. Higher education plays a central role in the social, cultural and economic development of modern societies. In South Africa today, the challenge is to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities. (Department of Education, 1997).

As a result of these imperatives, many universities in South Africa are currently undergoing major changes not just on a structural level but also on an ideological and interpersonal level. A number of policies and transformation-oriented initiatives have been introduced to meet transformation goals ranging from debates concerning 'the definition of the purpose and goal of higher education' to 'policy formulation, adoption and implementation in the areas of governance, funding, academic structure and programmes and quality assurance, the enactment of new laws and regulation and major restructuring and reconfiguration of the higher education institutional landscape and of institutions' (Badat 2010, 4, 5). At a national level numerous instruments have been introduced which seek to shape higher education transformation including for instance the Educational White Paper (1997),

the Higher Education Act of 1997, the National Commission on Higher Education's (NCHE) paper titled 'A Framework for Transformation' (1996), and the Department of Education's (DoE) Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation.

The need to eradicate discrimination based on race, class and gender was given further impetus in 2008 when the Minister of Education established a committee to 'investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions with a particular focus on racism and to make appropriate recommendation to combat discrimination and promote social cohesion' (DoE 2008). In the report of this committee some progress regarding transformation was acknowledged particularly in relation to student demographics, but little progress was found to have been made on a structural level as deeply embedded legacies of apartheid ensured the persistence of inequalities and resistance to change (DoE 2008).

Transformation is thus defined not just as greater inclusion of disadvantaged groups but also a change in the structure, practices, processes and cultures that enable discrimination and inequality (Viljoen and Rothmann 2002, 2, 3; Govinder, Zondo and Makoba 2013; Blunt and Cunningham 2002; van Wyk 2004; Waghid 2002; Bitzer 2010). This requires change in the values, norms, attitudes, perceptions, behaviour and the dominant practices that prevail in any particular institutional setting (Viljonen and Rothmann 2002, 3). According to van Wyk, transformation comprises of four factors, first, equity and redress; second, critical inquiry and new forms of knowledge production; third, communicative praxis in the form of effective communication and participation and finally citizenship, that is cultural change (van Wyk 2004, 165). Msibi (2013) further notes that sexuality and queer issues should also be included in the transformation process (see also Munyuki 2015).

The contribution of higher education to socio-economic development is not a new idea. Cloete and Moja (2005, 694) note that in African countries, higher education is expected to contribute to the socio-economic development of the society. In the South African context, the expectation is the same (Badat 2010; Singh 2001). At the demise of apartheid, the new democratic government was tasked with the problem of reconfiguring the country to align with its democratic principles. Consequently, a number of policies were instituted to ensure the transformation and development of the country. The transformation of higher education was recognised as part of this process as it reflected the inequalities within the country under apartheid (van Wyk and Alexander 2010; Akooje and Nkomo 2007). The South African Constitution (1996) and The Educational White Paper 3 (1997) among

others thus highlight the role played by higher education in realising the goals of transformation (Hemson and Singh 2010). Furthermore Badat (2010, 5) notes that the realisation of this imperative will contribute to the development of higher education and the society.

To realise transformation imperatives, scholars have argued that all individuals in the institutional sphere must be involved in the transformation process. Thus, individuals within universities, by making their contributions to the transformation of the university contribute in turn to the transformation of the society. This may not always be possible though, given the dominant structures and cultures that pervade universities as noted above. It is the position of this thesis that transformation or the ability of individuals to effect transformation is tied to agency. In the context of studies on the agency structure divide and the need for a structural and cultural change in universities in South Africa, this project aims to find out how transformation happens and when it happens. I am interested in how individual agents are able to use their agency to effect transformation amid limiting and rigid structures and cultures in the university. I argue that individual agency, access to power and resources are integrally linked to the transformation process. I further argue that coming to consciousness, which is brought on by a reformulation of an individual's interests enables individuals to take actions that are transformatory.

1.2 Personal Motivation

While I was taking a course on 'feminist theory' I came across an article written by Saba Mahmood titled *Feminist Theory, Embodiment and the Docile Agent: Some reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival*. In the article, she argues that agency can be conceptualised as both re-inscribing and rejecting powerful discourses. Her formulation of agency enables scholars and researchers to rethink our ideas on freedom, agency, choice, power, subjectivity and resistance. It also forces us to acknowledge the reality of the 'other' in our efforts at empowerment, freedom and transformation or social change. Mamhood argues against the conceptualisation of agency as resistance, as it closes off spaces for our understandings of other forms of agency. She argues that understanding agency as binaries of resistance and subordination enables a normalisation of the concept (Mahmood 2001, 203). Here a normalisation of agency allows for a view of agency as more than just resistance, as this precludes our viewing of other forms of agency. Mahmood further argues that if we accept the basic definition of freedom/agency as 'willingness of the subject to act', this action should be a consequence of her willingness (Mahmood 2001, 207; 2005, 11). She argues that dominant understandings of agency are synonymous with liberal ideas of freedom, which focuses on the rights of individuals. Therefore, any

action performed by a willing subject whether considered within the bounds of liberal ideas or not, must be seen as an enactment of freedom and agency (Mahmood 2001).

What is perhaps important is her conceptualisation of agency as consent and choice and not resistance, or subjugation, a concept which resonates with liberal ideas of freedom. Hence, we must understand agency as consent, choice and the willingness of the agent to act whether it is towards production, re-production or transformation/social change[3]. Agency then lies not in an individual's conformity or non-conformity to oppressive situations or to marginalising norms but in her willingness to do so, the operative word here being 'choice/consent'. Thus, whether such acts sit well with our sensibilities or not they can be defined as agency because they reflect individual choice.

While Mahmood's conception of agency enabled me to view agency differently, I had some reservations which led to certain questions, specifically the impact of social structures on human action and the implications for agency. I asked:

> Why must I fit into a specific code of conduct? Why do I have to condition my body in a specific way of being or norm? If after 5 years of doing something and I don't feel like myself when its gone, it may not be because I want it, or because it is a choice, it may be because my body has been conditioned into a specific set of acts or actions/practices, which I have now adapted to. My (initial or would be) desire/choice has been suppressed in exchange for something more desirable. If individual reality has been conditioned to specific act(s), can we still call that agency? If agency is choice or the capacity to act in one's own will, can such willingness be constructed as a choice if it has been modified and conditioned by structural powers and power/knowledge strategies in the context of the agent? (Question from an essay on agency; see also Bracke 2003)

Several scholars have noted the danger in focusing on experience as it limits our ability to recognise the 'ideologically conditioned categories that structure our experience' (see Stone-Mediatore 1998, 116). I thus began to think of the relationship between agency and the freedom to act in one's own will or choice and societal impositions (what I have now come to know as structures). More importantly how structures impact or determine our actions and what the implications for resistance

[3] In this thesis, I use the word transformation and social change or change interchangeably. They are taken to mean the reversal of relations of domination and the development of a new way of being and interacting with one another in the university. It is also the development of new practices, structures and cultures. Such structures and cultures must recognise and understand the importance of equality, the kind that takes individual differences into account. They must also recognise the historical and enduring effect of policies of discrimination on the discursive and material lives of individuals within that context.

and social change are. This led me to my current question and research topic on structure, agency and social transformation.

1.3 Rationale

This study locates itself within the debates concerning, and need for, transformation of higher education and the development of South African society. While a number of studies have focused on the imperative to transform, few studies have focused on the role of individual agency in the transformation process. After all, the world and in some ways structural properties are given to us and at the same time actively constituted by us (Van Manen 1997, XI). This study attempts to understand the nature of having agency to enable transformation via the experiences of academic staff members. Such phenomenological examination and reflection on the concept may provide new insights into our understanding of agency and especially its relation to transformation. This study aims at revealing moments at which individuals embedded in what has been identified as rigid structures and cultures perceive themselves as having had the agency to interrupt and transform them despite their rigid nature. The study is interested in what characterises these moments and what individual and institutional contexts make such transformations more or less possible/likely.

Existing research indicates the slow pace at which transformation is happening in South African universities (see Soudien 2010; Govinder, Zondo and Makoba 2013). While some universities claim to be making progress regarding transformation in terms of demographics, there has been less success at the level of changing institutional cultures and discriminatory micro practices embedded in universities (see for instance Cassim 2006, 429; Walker 2005; Msibi 2013). Numerous studies have noted the need for management to constructively engage in effecting change at the level of the institutional culture and structures of the university (Niemann 2010, 1003; van Wyk 2004, 168; Cassim 2006, 424; Hemson and Singh 2010, Ferrer-Balas et al 2008). Niemann for instance argues that institutional culture plays a major role in perpetuating disenchantment, discrimination and alienation (Niemann 2010, 1004). Hence central to transformation is for the institutional culture of the university to shift from one of discrimination to inclusion.

Institutional culture refers to 'the way things are done within an organisation, which reveals itself in its traditions, customs, values and shared understandings; the practices engaged in and those practices that are rewarded and supported' (Rhodes University Equity Policy, 2004, 4; see also Niemann 2010). Soudien (2010, 980) argues that structures are deeply social and tend to reproduce themselves (see

also Portnoi 2009; van Wyk and Alexander 2010). For instance, in examining the racial structure of higher education Soudien notes that the disparity between Whites and Blacks in terms of educational success is nearly impossible to eliminate given the current educational system in which only 5% of Black students will graduate while 60% of Whites will complete university successfully (Soudien 2010, 883).

In addition, the importance of leadership and governance to structural change and overall transformation of the higher education sector has been highlighted. Governance here is defined as those activities and efforts taken to 'guide, steer and control or manage' higher education (Hall, Symes and Luescher 2002). Fourie (1999) however notes an unwillingness to effect change that characterises many of the governing bodies of universities such as Councils and Senates. Given this, the transformation debate has also included the question of changing the composition of these bodies (Eckel 2001).

The role played by management in changing cultures of exclusion has also been highlighted (Niemann 2010, 1003; van Wyk 2004, 168; Cassim 2006, 424; Hemson and Singh 2010, Ferrer-Balas et al 2008; Shackleton, Riordan and Simonis 2006). As Astin and Astin (2000) argue, leadership can play a central role in constructing the culture of institutions in such a way that either prevents or allows for members of the institution to actively engage in transforming the institution. To achieve this active engagement by academic staff, Niemann (2010, 1006) argues that the academic environment needs to be characterised by staff experiencing a sense of belonging, solidarity and enhanced scholarship.

In order to effect change, research has noted the importance of leadership and staff involvement in the transformation process (see for instance Van-Der Westhuizen 2006; Portnoi 2009; Akooje and Nkomo 2007; Niemann 2010; Viljoen and Rothmann 2002; van Wyk 2004; Soudien 2010; Ferrer-Balas et al 2008). These studies argue that both leaders and staff members must be interested in and actively involved in the transformation process and must take steps to implement policies and strategies aimed at transformation if such policies are to be effective. This suggests that the extent to which leaders and individual staff members have agency to effect transformatory practices, determines the success of transformation policies. As noted above, agency is tied to transformation. In the light of these studies the present project aims to understand experiences of agency to effect transformation on the part of university staff. Since there is a tendency for structures to reproduce

themselves, this project aims at revealing moments at which individuals embedded in these structures perceive themselves as having had the agency to interrupt and transform them despite their rigid nature. The project is interested in what characterises these moments and what individual and institutional contexts make them more or less possible/likely.

In this study my focus is on individual academic staff members at one historically white South African university -- Rhodes University -- who are identified by others (and self-identify) as having been able to put in motion actions, policies, processes or changes that can be regarded as 'transformational' in the sense proposed by Education White Paper 3 – actions which serve to renew, change or overturn dominant ways of being that marginalise, disadvantage or exclude and which benefit the excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged in such a way as to effect more just, equal relations in the university whether this be at the level of staffing, students, research, teaching, governance/management, community engagement or social interaction. My interest is in how these individuals have experienced their own agency to effect transformation of existing cultures, practices and processes in the context of an overarching set of structures, relations of domination/subordination and ways of being which are inherited from the past.

1.4 Structure Agency and Social Transformation

Agency here is defined as 'the capacity for humans to act in their own right'; it is conscious goal-directed activity (Anderson 1980, 19; Elder Vass 2010, 2; Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Giddens 1984); an individual's ability to exercise some degree of control over the social relations which they find themselves in. This further implies agency's reproductive as well as transformative capacities (see Callinicos 2004; Elder-Vass 2010; New 1994; Sewell 1992; Giddens 1984). Agency is a necessity for social transformation as social structures do not just reproduce or transform themselves abstractly; such change is rather possible and seen through human action which is in turn influenced by social structures. While agents have a capacity to act on their own free will, their ability to carry out such acts is dependent on their historical contexts and the social structures that prevail in such contexts. Scholars have long debated the relationship between agency and structure and the influence of structures on human agents' capacity to act (see Callinicos 2004; Elder Vass 2010; Hay and Wincott 1998; Giddens 1984; New 1994; Sewell 1992; Mahoney and Snyder 1999; Ashwin 2009). On one end of the spectrum are scholars that emphasise the limiting nature of structures, that is the primacy of structures over agency (see Reed 1997, 31) and scholars on the other end have argued for the conception of both as mutually constitutive of each other (see for instance Giddens 1984;

Callinicos 1994; Anderson 1980). While some have conceived of structure purely as limiting, others have argued that structures can be both limiting and enabling (Callinicos 2004 see also Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992; New 1994).

Given the tendency for structures to reproduce themselves, my interest is in how particular agents in a specific context are capable of acting in such a way that produces/enables transformation of practices, structures, cultures and policies. Callinicos provides a way of approaching the agency-structure debate, he argues that the 'agents' structural capacity is determined by their relative access to productive resources and to power' (Callinicos 2004, 275). An individual's capacity for action, while partly determined by structures, is only possible if the position in which they find themselves gives them access to power and resources that enables them to act in such a way that creates change (see also Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992). Hence transformation depends on the array of possibilities available to an individual in a specific social context. This breaks with the idea of structures as merely limiting (Callinicos 2004, 275). Social structure implies a shifting set of power relations which individual agents interact with to either reproduce or transform existing social relations. This highlights the importance structure plays in agency and the importance of agency for transformation. As Callinicos (2004, 94) argues, 'the explanation for social action (transformation) involves referring to both structures and individuals'. He defines social structure as a 'relation connecting persons, material resources, supra-individual entities and institutions by virtue of which some persons gain power' (Callinicos 2004, xxiii; see also Sewell 1992; New 1994). Structures help to 'determine the powers that persons draw on when acting in the light of their beliefs and desires' (Callinicos 2004, 276).

Therefore, agency provides a means through which structures are transformed into process and humans enter into history (Anderson 1980, 17). Callinicos (2004, 100) argues that the agent's ability to realise their goals or desires is largely dependent on their position in social relations. Structure only become visible when action is taken, hence structures are only seen when agency is at play. This emphasises the symbiotic relationship of agency and structure. While intentionality, beliefs and desires are inherently part of human nature, the social context in which individuals find themselves determines what is possible (see also New 1994, 188; Coole 2005, 126). As New (1994, 188) argues, as agents we are born into specific structures and social positions, none of which is our choice and such positions hold their own set of opportunities and restrictions. An understanding of structures as influencing and not determining individual action enables an understanding of agency. In particular,

it allows for an understanding of the way in which structures impact on an individual's ability to effect transformation and simultaneously how individual actions reproduce or transform such structures.

It has been argued that leaders and academic staff members in institutions play a crucial role in transforming the prevailing culture of an institution (Niemann 2010, 1014; Astin and Astin 2000). Individual staff members can serve as agents of transformation as they possess a certain degree of autonomy to initiate transformative change in their various spheres of operation. Astin and Astin (2000, 37) also argue that students can change institutional cultures by encouraging their peers to model new principles, questioning leadership and advancing the shared purpose of the university.

Given this every member of the academic community is a change agent, the question then becomes if everyone is an agent of change and some deploy their agency and others do not, even though all are embedded within the same institutional and social structure, what are those enabling factors that allow some to deploy their agency and what are the disabling factors that prevent others from doing so?

1.5 Method, technique and procedure of the research

The study employs a hermeneutic phenomenological (H.P) approach in answering the research question (Heidegger 1962; Van Manen 1997; Koch 1995; Ajjawi and Higgs 2007; Kafle 2011). My chosen methodology was not selected because the approach was of interest to me — it was chosen because understanding the phenomenon of agency and how individual actions provided a means of seeing into the interactions between action, structures and change — required a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to participants' experiences of enablements and limitations within a specific context. As noted above, after all the world is given to us, yet actively constituted by us (Van Manen 1997, XI). The hermeneutic phenomenological perspective conceptualises human experiences as integrally linked to context, social and structural relations (Koch 1995; Dowling 2007; Crotty 1998; Flood 2010; Hamill and Sinclair 2010; Lopez and Willis 2004). The assumptions of hermeneutic phenomenology thus allows for a conceptualisation of the relationship between structure and agents, the researcher and participants and finally the agent and context.

In-depth interviews are used as a means through which the lived experiences and the participant's perception of these experiences can be understood. (Seidman 2006, 9; Grey 2004, 214; Kavale 2007,

1). It is common, when employing in-depth open ended interviewing in qualitative research, to engage with, on average, five to fifteen participants (Patton 2002; 104; Grey 2004, 22; Creswell 2003, 9). Seidman (2006, 7) notes that in-depth phenomenological interviews have the potential to reveal, through their detailed engagement with participants' experiences, the most complicated social abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people. In the case of the present thesis, the interviews conducted sought to understand participants' experiences of having agency to effect transformation at one historically white South African university. The interviews explored participants' experiences of agency and what enabled or constrained, in their view, their efforts at engaging in actions aimed at effecting transformation of some kind of existing structures, practices, norms or procedures within the domain in which they operate as academics. The interviews explored participants' experiences of their location in the institution, and how, if at all, it affected their capacity for agency and the meaning it held for them.

The data was analysed using a Hermeneutic and Phenomenological thematic analysis. Van Manen (1997) notes that such themes can be seen as 'structures of experiences'. I employed both an inductive and a deductive approach to my analytical process (see Moretti et.al 2011; White and Marsh 2005). The categories, themes and concepts from these two processes were then compared for new insights. The process of analysis involved six stages of coding, categorising, constructing themes, comparing themes with theory, literature and concepts from a pilot study and illustrating the phenomena and writing memos which formed the backbone of the final write-up. The process of coding was further divided into two stages (first cycle coding and second cycle coding). The first cycle coding included applying different initial coding methods (descriptive, value and process coding) (Saldana 2009) to the data. The second cycle coding (pattern coding) enables the researcher to reach a theoretical understanding of the data (Saldana 2009). These coding processes allowed for the examination of the beliefs, values, attitudes, action process and patterns of participants' stories. These produced insights into moments in which individuals have had agency to bring about transformation. This process of coding was conducted using computer data analysis software—NVivo -- to assist with my analytical process. The analysis and interpretation was then sent to the participants for participant checking to obtain further insight into the meaning and interpretation of the data that I had formulated (Van Manen 1997, 107). While my findings and interpretation resonated with participants' experiences, I had to negotiate my interpretation with some participants.

1.6 Scope of the study

The focus of the study is on individual/academic staff members who self-identify or have been identified by others, as having made an effort to contribute to the transformation process in the university. In order to understand the relationship between structure, agency and change, I focused on individual academics who have taken specific actions that might be interpreted as transformative in the sense that they interrupt existing business-as-usual ways of doing things in their context. I was interested in identifying actions oriented towards the core business or mission of the university: that is to say, related to teaching and learning, research, governance, management and/or community engagement. Through consultation with divisions such as Community Engagement, the Society for Female Academics (SFA), the Directorate of Research and the Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), I identified 'agents of change' — individuals who have acted in such a way as to effect changes in the practices, processes and cultures of the university. Participants needed to have been seen to have made or be making, a contribution to transforming the existing structures and cultures of some aspect of the university through teaching, research, governance, management and/or community engagement.

1.7 Thesis Structure

Chapter One: Introduction and Background to Study

In this chapter I give an overview of the thesis including: the background in which my investigation to the study developed; the context of the study; my conceptual framework; my methodology; my rationale for the study and the scope of study.

Chapter Two: The Context of Higher Education Transformation in South Africa

This chapter discusses the context of transformation in South Africa; it also discusses the context of transformation in the institution under study. It examines the progress of transformation including both demographic and cultural changes in the national and institutional sector since 1994. It also examines the progress of transformation in relation to the core mission of the university; teaching, research and community engagement.

Chapter Three: Structure Agency and Social Transformation -- A Conceptual Framing

In this chapter, I discuss the conceptual framework of my study. I examine the arguments and contentions within the structure, agency and social transformation debate. I draw on scholars like Roy Bhaskar, Magret Archer, Alex Callinicos, Anthony Giddens as well as others in discussing the theory

of action, specifically its relationship to structures and social transformation. I then draw out seven concepts from the main theorists as a threshold for understanding my data and to help answer my research question.

Chapter Four: The Hermeneutic Phenomenological Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological procedure I employed in answering my research question. It provides a sequential account of my analytical process. The chapter describes my research design, data collection, pilot study, participants' and my analysis. I also discuss issues relating to ethics, rigour, validity and reliability.

Chapter Five: Reformulating Interests -- Critical Personal Engagement

In this chapter, I argue that the reformulation of interests brought on by the individual's critical personal engagement with their context may provide one explanation/account for taking actions that effected transformation. I draw on Susan Babbitts' (1997, 378) argument for the political role of understanding acquired through personal engagement and activity. I define the reformulation of interests as arising out of one's critical engagement with one's context: the process of such engagement leads to a shift in one's interpretive background (Babbitt 1997) and enables the individual to see and experience things differently. Once interest is reformulated, it opens up the possibility for change and for the individual to act towards transformation.

Chapter Six: Coming to Consciousness

This chapter argues for 'coming to consciousness' as an important motivation explaining why participants came to be involved with taking actions that effected change in the university. The participants' understanding of transformation and their ability to realise the importance of transformation were critical in their decision to act towards transformation. I argue that being 'conscious' is a necessary condition for being able to identify the discourses, practices and ways of being that allow for the marginalisation of some; recognising the embeddedness of such discourses, norms and ways of being, enables the agent to find ways of rejecting and changing such relations. As Bartky (1977, 33) notes through consciousness 'we are able to make out possibilities for liberating collective action as well as unprecedented personal growth — possibilities that a deceptive sexist (colonial, apartheid) social reality has heretofore concealed'.

Chapter Seven: Battles

In this chapter, I argue that agents engaging in battles (discursive and material) is an essence of an agent's capacity to take actions towards transformation. I argue that transformation happens as a result

of agents' constant interactions, struggles and involvement with the system which produces these concessions and conflicts — in all their particularity. While it is true that structures impose limitations on human action, there is a range of possibilities open to the actor from which s/he can choose. To engage in battles is to choose from those possibilities when acting. In the study, the participants' actions revealed how they deployed their agency by way of their choices: interrupting, challenging, countering discourses, negotiating and persuading to exert change. The choice to fight, and engage in discursive and material battles, portrays the constraining/enabling aspects of structures and at the same time reveals agentic properties, as individuals deploy various strategies to attain their goals or interests. This highlights a shift in focus from agency as individuals acting alone to agency as individuals acting within specific contexts/fields.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In this chapter I draw conclusions on the main findings in relation to my research question. I also highlight the key findings of the thesis and make recommendations concerning enabling and deepening transformation in higher education in South Africa, particularly at historically white institutions.

2 Chapter

The Context of Higher Education Transformation in South Africa

2.1 Introduction

The chapter examines the state of transformation in South African higher education, in particular the institutional context of one University (Rhodes), a historically white university. It further examines the institution's efforts at transforming and the challenges faced as it attempts to align its policies with national imperatives to transform. Under apartheid both White and Black universities were constructed in such a way that they both contributed to the reproduction of apartheid discourses and policies (Wolpe 1995). Hence the imperative to transform the higher education sector in the new democratic era. The University is thus located within the broader context of transformation in South Africa and has to grapple with the challenges facing transformation in the higher education sector. As a historically white liberal university it especially has to deal with the difficulty of changing its institutional structure and culture.

In the context of a globalising world and rapid technological advancement, there is pressure on higher education institutions in the world to change and produce individuals capable of adapting to such change. Knight and Harvey (1996, VII) argue that the prime goal of higher education is to transform learners. South Africa is not removed from these pressures, and its transition to democracy and the need to eradicate all forms of exclusion, doubles this pressure to transform. The apartheid policies which emphasised discrimination based on race, gender and ethnic group in South Africa left the post 1994 South African government with the need to reverse such policies. As a result since 1994 there have been various efforts to address these inequalities on a structural, cultural, institutional and inter-personal level. The transformation of higher education was recognised as a part of this process as discrimination based on race, class, and gender continue to shape both its structures, cultures, processes and practices (DoE 1997; DoE 2008; Soudien 2010; van Wyk and Alexander 2010; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Hemson and Singh 2010). Therefore, the post-apartheid era government is committed to transforming higher education and the 'inherited social and economic structure that emphasised inequalities and institutionalising a new social order' (Badat 2010, 4).

As a result, many universities in South Africa are currently undergoing major changes not just on a structural level but also on a cultural, ideological and interpersonal level. A number of policies and transformation-oriented initiatives have been created to meet this imperative for transformation defined in the Educational White Paper 3. They include 'defining the purpose and goal of higher education, policy research and formulation, funding, changing academic structures, quality assurance, creating new laws and regulation and major restructuring and reconfiguration of higher education' (Badat 2010, 4, 5). Policies such as the Educational White Paper: A programme for the Transformation of South Africa (1997), Higher Education Act of 1997, the National Commission on Higher Education's (NCHE) paper titled A Framework for Transformation (1996), and the Department of Education's Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation, are being implemented (Badat 2010).

A major focus of this need for change was the racial divide and the need to eradicate discrimination based on race, class, gender and sexuality. An overview of the South African higher education landscape reveals deeply embedded apartheid legacies. Even 20 year after the end of apartheid, while showing a significant increase in participation of Black students and staff in higher education, the demographics still reflect under-representation of those excluded under apartheid, especially in senior management positions. Universities and higher education institutions are still structured along racial lines with Whites still dominant in the upper echelons of both academic and administrative staff. As noted by the Council on Higher Education (CHE), improvements in student demographics notwithstanding, the student body still does not reflect the wider South African population (CHE 2004). Also on the gender front, there is a dominance of White men in professorial positions while the lower positions reflect an increase in female staff. Apart from the demographics revealing the slow pace at which transformation is unfolding in higher education, numerous scholars have noted the lack of structural changes at HE institutions and the problem with changing the institutional cultures of especially historically white universities (HWUs) (CHE 2007; Viljoen and Rothmann 2002; Govinder, Zondo and Makgoba 2013; Blunt and Cunningham 2002; van Wyk 2004; Waghid 2002; Bitzer 2010; McKenna and Quinn 2012; Msibi 2013). This chapter provides an overview of the South African higher education institutional landscape since 1994, and the achievements and challenges faced in particular by Rhodes University.

2.2 Higher Education Landscape

The current form which the higher education landscape takes in South Africa can be understood in terms of the legacies of apartheid. Under apartheid the state was divided along racial and ethnic lines and the result was an unequal practice where services provided to each group was different and each group required its own departments which were created to deal with various sections of the society, for example in relation to education, health care, welfare and other services (Reddy 2004, 8; Badat 2007, 4; 2008; Bunting 2006). In 1953 the government took control of education, and access to education then became strictly based on race and ethnicity (MoE 2002). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 was based on an ideology of the innate superiority of Whites and the inferiority of Blacks and it centralised control of Black education in the hands of the state (Hylsop 1989; Giliomee 2009).

The way in which higher education was structured reflected these inequities in the country — White and Black[4] students had varying degrees of access to proper education. For example, students attended different schools depending on their race and these schools were guided by different policies regarding the medium of instruction and curriculum (Badat 2007, 3; de Wet and Wolhuter 2009; Reddy 2004; Bunting 2006). Reddy (2004, 8) argues that under apartheid 'the function of education especially for Blacks was to create 'docile subjects' that readily accepted the policies of the apartheid state and to consolidate White identity'. Hence those who were classified 'non-White' (African, Coloured and Indian) were expected to serve the White society and assume subservient roles (Reddy 2004, 8). Education was meant to fulfil the ideological function of keeping Blacks subservient and maintaining White domination (Reddy 2004, 9). Educational resources were distributed unequally based on race with the main purpose being to normalise the inferiority of non-Whites and to inculcate ethnic identities. Malherbe (1977, 731 in Badat 2008, 4) notes that by 1948 the demographic proportion of Black students in university was 950, which was 4.6% of the enrolments – a figure which, by 1959, had increased to only 10.7%. These policies ensured that education was restricted to White learners. For example, African teachers had to be trained by church missions with little funding and it was only the South African Native College that was established in 1916 that had a preponderance of Black students (Badat 2009, 48: 13; Shepherd 1995, 9).

The report by The Presidency on the Twenty-Year Review of South Africa since the end of apartheid highlights the pervasiveness of apartheid educational policies (The Presidency 2014; see also CHE

[4] In this thesis Black is used to refer to African, Indian and Coloured. The African, Indian and Coloured categories are used for emphasis in this chapter.

2016). It notes that under apartheid the funding for White students was 10 times more than that of an African learner (The Presidency, 2014 40). In 1982 the government spent R146 educating a Black learner but spent R1, 211 on each White learner (Thomas 1996, 330; de Wet 2013 in Badat and Sayed 2014, 130-131). However, despite the efforts at controlling and oppressing Blacks education became a site of resistance and mass struggle especially by students (Luescher and Symes 2003, 5).

By 1994, there were 21 universities and 15 technikons in South Africa and these institutions were governed by eight different departments (CHE 2004, 39). These institutions were made up of four English universities, six Afrikaans universities and seven technikons which were reserved for White students, six universities and five technikons which were located in 'Bantustans' for African students, two urban universities for Black students, two universities and two technikons for Coloured and Indian students[5] (CHE 2004, 40; Badat 2003, 5; Bunting 2006, 49-51). In 1990 only 28% of Black students were enrolled in White institutions and by 1993 after the fall of apartheid, the demographic proportion had only increased by 10% (CHE 2004, 61). Between 1990 and 1994 there were significant changes in the higher education sector with historically black universities (HBUs) growing by 38% and HWUs growing by 8%. Despite this growth, the participation rates were low and very unequal with 70% of Whites participating in higher education, 9% of Africans, 13% of Coloureds and 40% of Indians participating in Higher education (CHE 2004, 62). The proportion of academic staff revealed severe inequalities. After the fall of apartheid in 1994, 80% of the academic staff was White of which 34% were women with the latter concentrated in the lower levels of academia (CHE 2004, 62). An overview of the demographic proportion of students and staff in higher education shows the exclusion of both Blacks and women in the sector as at 1994.

After the end of apartheid, the government was tasked with the need to transform and restructure all aspects of South African society and to redress past inequalities by changing all structures, practices and processes that represented apartheid policies and legacies. Education was one of the areas that needed to transform and as numerous scholars have highlighted, it was also realised that there is an important role that needs to be played by universities in the wider social transformation process (Badat 2010; CHE 2007). The Educational White Paper 3 and National Plan for Higher Education among other policy initiatives have highlighted the social purpose of higher education, especially regarding the transformation of South African society (DoE 1997). As a result, many universities in

[5] See Appendix I for a comprehensive classification of universities during Apartheid.

South Africa are currently undergoing major changes not just on a structural level but also on an ideological and interpersonal level (Badat 2007).

Higher education in South Africa is commonly construed as having three interrelated purposes: the production of knowledge (research), the dissemination of knowledge (teaching) and undertaking community engagement (Badat 2007, 14; 2013, 2). The Educational White Paper 3 sums up the goals of the university as follows:

1. to contribute to the process of transformation;
2. to meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives;
3. to address the development needs of society and to teach and train people for specialised functions;
4. to make a contribution to socialising responsible, critically constructive citizens;
5. knowledge creation and production through teaching, research and learning (DoE, 1997).

The White Paper also sets various transformation objectives for the higher education system as a whole and for individual institutions. Among these are increased and broadened participation, ensuring access for previously disadvantaged groups, creating inclusive institutional and cultural environments and transformation of the curriculum (DoE, 1997). The restructuring of the higher education system aims also to fit the needs of a transforming nation and globalising world (DoE, 1997). In the context of democratisation, the period from 1994 up to 2008 was characterised by policy making and implementation towards transformation in various spheres of South African society. In the education sector as mentioned above several policies were formulated and implemented. In the period from 1994 to 2003, there were 7 White papers, 3 green papers, 26 bills, 35 acts, 11 regulations, 52 government notices and 26 calls for comments, all focused on the transformation of higher education (Sayed and Kanjee in Badat and Sayed 2014, 131). Also a number of organisations were set up to monitor and organise the transformation process, including: the Higher Education Branch in the National Department of Education (NDP), the Council on Higher Education (CHE), the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NASFAS), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (CHE 2007, 6).

Saleem Badat identifies four periods of policy activity from 1990-2008[6]. The period from 1990-1994 was characterised by the definition of an agenda for transformation. During this period, there was much resistance to apartheid and the focus then was on the principles, values, vision and goals of higher education and the relationship between the state and transformation in higher education (Badat 2009, 458; see also Badat 2003). With all the attention being placed on educational transformation, Badat notes that little attention was paid to the contradiction between the values and goals being espoused and the availability of human and financial resources to implement transformation (Badat 2009, 459). During the second period 1994-1999, there was more focused and directed policy making that led to the creation of the South African Constitution in 1996, the Education White paper in 1997 and the Higher Education Act of 1997 (Badat 2009, 459; Luescher and Symes 2003, 6). These formal policies provided the policy framework for the transformation of Higher Education and defined the goals, strategies, structures and instruments for the implementation of these goals (see Luescher and Symes 2003, 7). This led to the establishment of a legislative and policy framework, the formulation and adoption of a number of subsidiary policies and the establishment of governmental infrastructure for the implementation of these policies (Badat 2009; 2003; Luescher and Symes 2003, 7). The Educational White Paper 3 notes that one of the requirements for the transformation of the higher education system is to 'increase and broaden participation, overcome apartheid legacies of 'fragmentation, inequality and inefficiency' and to increase access for Blacks, women, disabled and mature students and generate new curricula and flexible models of learning and teaching' (DoE 1997). The White paper further highlights the principles that must guide the process of transformation in higher education including: equity and redress, democratisation, development, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability (DoE, 1997).

The period after 1999 (1999-2004) was one of policy implementation and the strong involvement of the state. It saw a shift in focus to concerns with the financial and human resources needed to effect transformation and government made key decisions regarding transformation (Badat 2003, 14; Luescher and Symes 2003, 7). These decisions were reflected in the National Plan for Higher Education which provides a framework for the implementation of the transformation plan in White Paper 3 and identifies the interventions and strategies necessary for transformation (Badat 2009, 460; Badat 2003; Luescher and Symes 2003, 7). Five main goals were identified in the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) namely:

[6] See Appendix G for the table of the key policy initiatives between 1990 and 2006

1. Providing access to higher education for all irrespective of their race, class, gender or disability and producing graduates with the skill to meet the needs of the country.
2. Promoting access and redressing the inequalities of the past by ensuring equal representation in the composition of university students and staff.
3. Ensuring diversity in the different institutions in higher education to meet the different needs of individuals and the country.
4. Building a high level of research capacity and improving the research strength of the sector.
5. Restructuring higher education institutions to move beyond the inequalities of the past and establish institutions that reflect the values of a non-racist and sexist society (MoE 2001).

In terms of equity, the NPHE proposed that institutions establish targets to ensure an increase in participation to reflect the demographic composition of the society. In this regard, the participation rate of African and Coloured students as at 2005 was 12%, and 16% in 2012 while that of White students as at 2012 was 57% and Indian students 47% (CHE VitalStats 2010; 2012). The demographic proportion of women reflected gross inequalities at that time with the proportion only increasing from 18% in 2005 to 23% in 2012 (CHE VitalStats 2010; 2012). The policies in this period highlighted the need for a removal of language barriers, access to underrepresented fields especially for women and Blacks, the introduction of academic development programmes, promoting access for disabled students and providing funding for working class and poor students (MoE 2001).

The period from 2004-2008, focused on system and institutional stability through more interactive and iterative planning. There was also increased funding and an emerging focus on quality assurance (Badat 2009, 461). Thus NSFAS was established in 1995 with a view to effecting social redress for poor students without the finances to access education (Badat 2007, 11; CHE 2009, 28-29). Overall, the different policies note the importance of an active political commitment for the transformation process to be successful and for equality to be achieved (Badat and Sayed 2014, 131-132). The transformation process has engineered a lot of policies and changes to ensure the development of an equal society. Despite these efforts, South African universities continue to be dogged by persistent legacies of sexism and racism inherited from the past but re-inscribed in new ways in the present. Rhodes University is not removed from these challenges especially given its historically white status.

The Institutional Context: Rhodes University

The vision of Rhodes University highlights it commitment to the democratic ideals of the state. It states that it aims 'to be an outstanding internationally-respected academic institution which proudly affirms its African identity and which is committed to democratic ideals, academic freedom, rigorous scholarship, sound moral values and social responsibility' (Rhodes University Vision and Mission Statement, 2014). The mission statement further highlights the University's commitment to the transformation process:

> … to acknowledge and be sensitive to the problems created by the legacy of apartheid, to reject all forms of unfair discrimination and to ensure that appropriate corrective measures are employed to redress past imbalances (Rhodes University, Vision and Mission, 2014).

As a historically white liberal University it especially has to deal with an institutional culture which has been characterised as 'White'. The University locates its agenda for transformation within the context of transformation in South Africa and the wider project of the eradication of apartheid discriminatory legacies. Despite an improvement in the University's race and gender demographics as will be shown later, a closer look reveals that staff in senior positions are overwhelming White and male, with the number of male professors being 71% in 2013 and the number of White professors 91%, African 4%, Indian 2% and Coloured 4% in 2013 (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2014). As at 2014, the number of White professors had increased to 94% while that of African and Indian professor remained the same (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2015). The figures reveal the slow pace of, and difficulty with which, transformation is being achieved in the University. Different policies have been created to meet the transformation goals set in the White Paper and the University's mission in order to try to rectify this situation.

Following the Higher Education Act of 2002, White Paper 3 of 1997 and the Employment Equity Act, Rhodes University drafted its Equity Policy in 2003 which took effect in 2004. The aim of the policy is to ensure the eradication of discrimination and change the institutional structure and culture of the University. The equity policy highlights Rhodes' commitment to: transforming teaching, learning, and research, and ensuring student access and an overall transformation of the University — eliminating unfair discrimination and changing the institutional culture of the University (Rhodes University Equity Policy 2003). In 2005 a disability policy for both staff and students was put in place. The policy recognises the need to allow staff and students with impairments to participate in the University fully, its objectives being to ensure the elimination of unfair discrimination regarding

individuals with impairments within the various sectors of the University (Rhodes University Disability Policy 2005). The policy also recognises the particular needs of people with impairments and aims to ensure the availability of resources to ensure their ability to contribute maximally to the University as well as providing such individuals with privacy and freedom (Rhodes University Disability Policy 2005). Individuals living with disabilities are also ensured, in terms of the policy, the choice as to whom they will disclose their impairment to, except where this is required by law (Rhodes University Disability Policy 2005). Also in 2009 the University created a policy for the eradication of unfair discrimination and harassment. The policy ensures that the University advances social cohesion through promoting a culture that supports all staff and students, irrespective of their race and gender. It further notes that 'within this context, it must be understood that unfair discrimination and harassment will not be tolerated'. The policy allows for the implementation of strategies to reduce and prevent the occurrence of discrimination and harassment and prejudice and to ensure that there are available spaces for reporting any occurrence there of (Rhodes University Policy on Eradicating Unfair Discrimination and Harassment, 2009). In addition, in 2013 a naming policy was created to promote and redress the imbalances of the past, the objective being to ensure that all new names and where appropriate, old names that need to be changed, will be reflective of the African identity of the University and its location (Rhodes University Naming Policy 2013). Finally, in 2014 the University created a language policy which recognises that South Africa is a multi-lingual country and that such multilingualism should be reflected in the University. The policy recognises all official languages in South Africa and ensures that language does not prevent access for, and the success of, students, hence promoting 'multilingualism and the intellectualization of African languages' (Rhodes University Language Policy 2014). These efforts notwithstanding, the experiences of Black students and staff reveal a deeply entrenched masculine and White culture (DoE 2008, 13) that persists in the day-to-day practices of the institution. While the policy of the University reflects a commitment to transformation, its practices tell a different story.

2.3 Increased and Equal Access, Opportunities and Participation

Access and participation, especially for Blacks and women, have been highlighted as among the core aspects of transformation in higher education. The legacies of apartheid ensured unequal participation rates among Coloureds, Indians and especially among Africans. As at 1994, the participation rate was especially skewed with Whites and men dominating the higher education landscape (CHE 2004). Hence, a major focus of the need for change was the racial divide and the need to eradicate discrimination based on race, class and gender. In 1994, the participation rates among Black students

were low especially regarding students at historically white universities, in comparison with a relatively high rate of participation among White students (CHE 2004, 61). Badat notes that since 1994, a well-defined agenda and framework for higher education and a foundation for the new institutions have been created to ensure that the legacies of apartheid are overcome (Badat 2007, 9). The new system saw the inclusion of universities of technology, comprehensive institutions, and contact and distance institutions to ensure diversity in the system. The restructuring of the institutional landscape has allowed for a construction of the higher education system in a principled, imaginative way that is suited to meet the needs of the contemporary era (Badat 2007, 10). Since 1994 the polices that were put in place have seen a very gradual change in the demographics of universities in line with the White Paper and the National Plan, as is depicted in the tables below showing demographic change between 2005 and 2012.

Table 1: South African Higher Education Enrolment by 'Race and Gender'

Race/Gender	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
African	61%	61%	63%	64%	65%	67%	68%	69%
Coloured	6%	7%	6%	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Indian	7%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	5%
White	25%	25%	24%	22%	21%	20%	19%	18%
Female	55%	55%	56%	56%	57%	57%	58%	58%
Male	45%	45%	44%	44%	43%	43%	42%	42%

Council on Higher Education VitalStats 2010, 2011, 2012

In line with the National Plan, there has been increased and broadened participation within higher education. There has also been an increase in enrolment of students: from 473,000 in 1993 to 737,472 in 2005 (Badat 2007, 10). Additionally, there has been an extensive de-racialization of the student body with African (including coloured and Indian) students increasing from 40% in 1993 to 61% in 2005, 64% in 2008 and 69% in 2012 (CHE VitalStats 2012), and Black students from 52% to 75% (Badat 2007, 10). In 1994 of the 47% of Africans enrolled in universities only 13% were in White universities (CHE 2004, 62). On the gender front enrolment of women increased from 43% in 1994 to 54% in 2002, 55% in 2005 and 58% in 2012 while that of men decreased from 57% to 45% in 2005 and 42% in 2012 (CHE 2004, 62, 67; CHE VitalStats, 2010, 2011, 2012). As at 2002 the number of African students had increased to 60%, Coloured students to 5% and Indian students to 7% while

that of White students had decreased to 27%. By 2012 the number of African students had increased to 69%, Coloured students to 6% and that of White and Indian students had decreased to 27% and 5% respectively (CHE 2004, 66, 67; CHE VitalStats, 2010, 2011, 2012). While there has been an increase in enrolments especially of African students, the overall increase in the rate of participation has been small -- from 12% in 2005 to 16% in 2012 with that of Whites decreasing slightly from 57% in 2005 to 55% in 2012 (CHE VitalStats, 2010; 2012). Additionally, it must be noted that in comparison with the population of South Africa, the increase in participation is small. Africans form 80% of the population, Coloureds9%, Indians 3% and Whites 8%, whereas Africans make up just 32% of university staff and Whites staff members are still strongly over represented at 53% in universities (CHE VitalStats, 2012; Statistics South Africa 2014).

Table 2: South African Higher Education Postgraduate Graduation Rates

Race/Gender	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
African	60%	60%	61%	62%	65%	66%	66%	68%
Coloured	64%	64%	67%	71%	72%	74%	70%	74%
Indian	61%	61%	60%	62%	62%	65%	67%	70%
White	75%	75%	78%	79%	81%	80%	81%	82%
Female	69%	69%	70%	71%	73%	73%	73%	74%
Male	63%	63%	65%	65%	67%	67%	68%	71%

Council on Higher Education VitalStats 2010, 2011, 2012

African post graduate graduation levels rose from 60% in 1995 to 68% in 2012, Coloured 64% in 2005 to 74% in 2012 and Indian 61% in 2005 to 70%, the Coloured and Indian demographics showed little increase within the period of 1995-2002, that of females increasing from 69% in 2005 to 74% in 2012 (CHE 2004, 72-74; CHE VitalStats, 2010; 2012). Despite this increase, White students continue to graduate at a higher rate than Africans with Whites at 82% in 2012 and especially at the Master's level with women at 48.3%. Doctoral graduations reflected this low rate of women in the Master's programmes with women constituting 42% and men 58%. (CHE VitalStats, 2010; 2011; 2012). The figures however reveal an increase in the number of Blacks both at the Masters level from 47.5% in 2005 to 56.9% in 2012 and at the doctoral level from 41.4% in 2005 to 55.5% in 2012. This

change however hides the unequal distribution of especially Africans and females at postgraduate levels, with more women and Africans going into the humanities than sciences (CHE 2009).

Equal Access and Participation: Rhodes University

As a part of providing more equitable student access, Rhodes University, in common with other South African universities, introduced the Extended Studies Programme in 2005 (Extended Studies Unit 2009, 2). This programme provides access to students without the required entry points for a three-year degree. The students are placed in a one year foundation programme in which they are assisted with their mainstream courses. Fewer credits are taken in a single year and the aim is to complete the degree in four instead of the regulation three years. The programme has a success rate of 85% to 95% (CHERTL Annual Report 2013). The University has been able to improve the racial and gender demographics of its student body in the period between 1999 and 2013 in keeping with the national shifts noted above. In this respect the University has had some success with respect to the goals of White Paper 3 and the National Plan for Higher Education which calls for a de-racialization of the student body across universities.

Table 3: Rhodes University Students Demographics

Race/Gender	1999	2003	2005	2008	2010	2012	2013
African	36%	44%	44%	46%	50%	52%	54%
Coloured	4%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Indian	10%	6%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%
White	50%	44%	46%	45%	42%	40%	38%
Female	58%	57%	57%	59%	59%	58%	58%
Male	42%	43%	43%	41%	41%	42%	42%

Digest of statistics 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014

In 1999, there were 36% Africans, 4% Coloureds, 10% Indians and 50% Whites, and by 2008 the number had increased to 46% Africans, while that of Coloured, Indians and Whites showed a decrease to 40%, 5% and 45% respectively in Rhodes university (RU Digest of Statistics 2014). By 2013 the number of Africans had increased to 54% while that of White students has decreased to 38% (RU Digest of Statistics 2014). On the whole Rhodes University experienced a 15% growth in 2009 and a 5% growth in 2013. The proportion at undergraduate levels increased to 66% in 2012 with the total

number of Black undergraduate students increasing from 59% in 2009 to 64% in 2013. The above statistics show an impressive improvement in the representivity of the racial composition of students in the University between 1999 and 2012. Overall the White student component shows a steady decline from 50% in 2003 to 38% in 2013. The data also reveals an improvement in the gender demographics of the student body with women comprising 58% of students in 2013 (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2014).

However, at the faculty level the data shows that there is a high concentration of female students in the Humanities and Pharmacy faculties, while male students are concentrated in the Science and Commerce faculties (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2014). The data reveals that 65% of females are in Humanities, while 46% are in the sciences, Africans dominate the Humanities and Pharmacy with 45% and 70% respectively and Whites (52% compared with 43% Africans) continue to dominate in the sciences (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2014). At postgraduate level the proportions are more skewed with Africans constituting 40% of the postgraduate enrolment in sciences and Black females constituting just 20% (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2014).

Table 4: Rhodes University Postgraduate Demographics

Race	2003	2005	2008	2010	2012	2013
African	38%	38%	42%	45%	58%	50%
Coloured	4%	5%	3%	4%	5%	3%
Indian	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%
White	54%	53%	50%	47%	34%	43%

Digest of statistics 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014

The figures above reveal that there has been an improvement in the postgraduate composition of the University with African post graduates increasing from 38% in 2003 to 50% in 2013 and White postgraduates decreasing from 54% in 2003 to 43% in 2013, while the proportion of Coloured students showed a slight decrease from 4% in 2003 to 3% in 2013 and that of Indians remained relatively static. These increases reflect the progress made towards the national goals and the targets set by the National Plan. While this is true of the student body, the same cannot be said of academic staff and senior management.

2.4 Equal Representation, Inclusion and Building the Next Generation of Academics

At the end of apartheid, the representation of academic staff at universities reflected apartheid policies, thus academic staff was overwhelmingly White and male with Blacks comprising most of the low-level employees (CHE 2004, 62). Therefore, one of the imperatives for higher education transformation as noted by the Educational White Paper 3 is the increased representation of Black and female academic staff in an overwhelming White and male higher education setting (DoE 1997). Existing research on the progress of the higher education regarding staff however highlights the continued underrepresentation of Blacks and women especially in senior positions in academia (CHE 2004; 2008).

Table 5: South African Higher Education Academic Staff by Race and Gender

Race/Gender	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
African	15%	24%	24%	25%	28%	29%	30%	32%
Coloured	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Indian	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%	8%	9%	9%
White	52%	59%	59%	58%	58%	56%	54%	53%
Female	44%	45%	45%	45%	46%	46%	47%	48%
Male	55.9%	55%	55%	55%	54%	54%	55%	52%

Council on Higher Education VitalStats 2010, 2011, 2012

Table 6: South African Higher Education Administrative Staff Members by Race and Gender

Race/Gender	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
African	41%	44%	44%	46%	48%	50%	52%	54%
Coloured	12%	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	14%	14%
Indian	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%
White	40%	38%	36%	34%	33%	31%	30%	28%
Female	61%	62%	62%	61%	63%	62%	67%	61%
Male	39%	38%	38%	39%	38%	38%	39%	39%

Council on Higher Education VitalStats 2010, 2011, 2012

Table 7: South African Higher Education Staff Members by Race

Race	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
African	36%	37%	37%	39%	41%	42%	42%	44%
Coloured	8%	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Indian	6.6%	6.5%	6.9%	6.4%	6.3%	6.1%	6.3%	6.1%
White	46.3%	45.3%	44.1%	42%	42.4%	41.2%	40.4%	39.2%

Council on Higher Education VitalStats 2010, 2011, 2012

Table 7 reveals that as at 2012 the number of African and Coloured staff in higher education had increased while that of Indians remained relatively unchanged (CHE VitalStats, 2010; 2011; 2012). In 1994, the Council on Higher Education noted that of the 45,000 staff in higher education, 80% of the academic staff were White, 12% African, 4% Coloured and 6% Indian and only 34% of academic staff were women and they were concentrated mostly in the lower positions and as at 1993 only 15% of full time Black academic staff were employed in historically white universities (CHE 2004, 62). As is evident in table five, between 2005 and 2012 these demographic proportions had increased (CHE VitalStats, 2010; 2011; 2012). While these figures show an increase in the number of Black

academic staff, the numbers are low. Thus, Whites continue to be in the majority of higher level academic staff at universities. This is indicative of a surface level transformation in universities as demographic change is mainly reflected in the lower levels of staff appointments. This is evident in non-academic sector (see table 6) which shows a higher proportion of Africans than in the academic sector (see table 5). In the non-academic sector, as at 2012, there was 54% Africans, 28% Whites, 14% Coloureds and 4% Indians of which 61% were women and 39% were men while on the professoriate level 80% of professors, 80% of associate professors and 67% of senior lecturers were White men (CHE VitalStats, 2010; 2011; 2012; CHE 2009, 72). The period between 1994 and 1997 showed an overall increase in staff in universities, and there was an increase in the number of women professors from 13% to 22% and women senior lecturers from 28% to 40% and women lecturers from 46% to 50% (CHE 2009, 79). However senior management ranks did not see the same progress as the lower management ranks which is indicative of the deep structural challenges faced by many universities.

Africans constituted 32% of academic staff, Whites 53%, Coloureds 4% and Indians 8% as at 2012 (CHE VitalStats, 2012). While the figures above reflect improvements in the demographics of higher education (especially at the staff level), when compared to the wider South African demography the picture is less promising. The report by the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions (the 'Soudien' Report), noted that most institutions had poorly developed structures and networks to identify and retain Black academic staff (DoE 2008, 17).

Overall there have been significant shifts in the composition of the student body with African enrolment increasing from 40% in 1993 to 69% in 2012 (CHE 2004, 90; CHE VitalStats, 2012). Regarding the policies and institutions created in 1994, there seems to be an improvement in the stark racial divide in higher education at least with respect to the student body and the lower echelons of academic staff. Badat (2007, 11, 12) notes however that despite this seeming progress, the changes in demographics especially in relation to men and women 'mask inequalities in their distribution across institutions, qualification levels and academic programmes'. Dropout rates are very high especially for Africans, with the dropout rate for Africans in 2012 being the highest at 50%, Coloureds 48%, Indians 43%and Whites the lowest at 31% (CHE VitalStats, 2010).

Numbers aside, a number of scholars have argued that in the South African context universities still have discriminatory cultures, and that for transformation to happen there needs be a change at the level of cultures, habits, practices, processes and ways of doing things, as embedded in them are race and gender (among others) discrimination (Cassim 2006; Niemann 2010, 1006; van Wyk 2004, 170). In examining the structure of higher education Soudien (2010) further notes that deeply embedded practices ensure that the disparity between Whites and Blacks in terms of educational success is nearly impossible to eliminate. For within the current educational system only 5% of Black children will graduate while 60% of Whites will complete university successfully (Soudien 2010, 883). Badat (2007, 12) further argues that while institutional restructuring is a necessary condition for the transformation of higher education as noted by the Ministry of Education in the report of the National Working Group to the Minister of Education, it is not a sufficient condition. Therefore, the challenge regarding transformation will be to recognise and change oppressive structures.

Equal representation and inclusion in Rhodes University

While the student body of Rhodes University reflects the demographic shifts that have taken place in the higher education sector in South Africa, the same cannot be said for staff especially in the upper level academic positions where the composition remains overwhelmingly White and male. An overview of the data reveals that most Black and female members of staff are concentrated at the lower levels of academic staff. While Blacks and women are well represented in the administrative, support and non-academic staff at the lower levels, the same is not true at the upper administrative and academic levels.

Efforts have been made by the University to create programmes to support its staff members and ensure their development. For instance, the need to grow a future generation is addressed by the Accelerated Development Programme which has existed for more than 10 years at the University. The programme was created to help young academics develop by pairing them with more experienced academics and reducing their teaching load. The programme saw the appointment of 25 lecturers of which 23 have completed and 11 have been appointed to permanent positions in the University (CHERTL Annual Report 2013).

Table 8: Rhodes University Academic Staff Demographics

Race/Gender	2003	2005	2008	2010	2012	2013
African	8%	11%	14%	13%	16%	18%
Coloured	4%	4%	5%	5%	8%	8%
Indian	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	5%
White	85%	82%	78%	79%	73%	70%
Black	15%	18%	22%	21%	27%	30%
Male	59%	57%	57%	57%	57%	55%
Female	41%	43%	43%	43%	43%	48%

Digest of statistics 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014

Table 9: Rank of full time academic staff 2013

	Male				Female			
Rank	African	Coloured	Indian	White	African	Coloured	Indian	White
Professor	4%	0%	2%	71%	0%	4%	0%	20%
Ass Prof	10%	2%	0%	64%	0%	5%	2%	17%
Snr lect	6%	2%	3%	37%	4%	2%	2%	45%
Lecturer	12%	6%	%	29%	9%	3%	7%	30%

Digest of statistics 2014

The tables above reflect the slow pace at which transformation is happening with respect to academic staffing in the University. As at 2003 the number of African academic staff was 8%, and by 2010 this number had increased to 13% and to 18% in 2013. The data on gender shows an increase in female academic staff from 41% in 2003 to 45% in 2010 and 48% in 2013. The demographic proportions get further skewed when the rank of academic staff is taken into consideration.

Table 10: Race Proportions of Permanent Academic Staff by Rank

Position	Indian	African	Coloured	White
Professor	2%	4%	4%	91%
Associate Prof	2%	10%	7%	81%
Senior Lecturer	4%	11%	4%	82%
Lecturer	13%	21%	9%	58%
Junior Lecturer	0%	50%	25%	25%

Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2014

As at 2008 the data reveals that only 5% of the professors were Africans, with 77% being White men, while 15% of the professors were White women. Moving down the ladder, of the associate professors in 2008, only 2.4% were African men, 21.4% were White women and 74% were White men, there were no female African professors and associate professors at this time. It is only at the senior lecturer and lecturer level that women and Black academics showed more representation: as at 2008 there were 10% Africans of which 4.5% were women, 1.5% Indian men, 1.5% Indian women, 52% White men and 31% White women. The subsequent five years period saw little improvement in these figures. As at 2013, White male professors (70%) and male associate professors (65%) still dominated and women comprised only 20% of the professoriate.

2.5 Teaching and Learning

> To create a research-based teaching and learning environment that will encourage students to reach their full potential, that is supportive of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and that will produce critical, capable and skilled graduates who can adapt to changing environments (Rhodes University, Vision and Mission, 2014).

Rhodes University's mission and vision statement highlights the importance of teaching and research to the development and transformation of not only higher education but the nation in a globalising world. The effect of apartheid policies meant that most institutions in the higher education sector in post 1994 South Africa were still very traditional in their approach to teaching and learning and these traditional approaches have been challenged in South Africa as well as other parts of the world

(Schmits 1998 in Fourie 1999, 283). The need for change in the quality of teaching has been highlighted as one of the processes integral to the transformation of higher education institutions. The value of excellence in teaching and learning has been recognised by South Africa's Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association (HELTA). The Council on Higher Education notes that teaching forms 'a space in which high level skills are developed for the labour market and it is also expected to develop critical engaged citizens through the ongoing engagement with knowledge and with other people' (CHE 2009, 17). The Educational White Paper 3, among other policies further notes 'the development of individual intellectual ability' (teaching), as one of the core pillars and purpose of universities and that to enable transformation on a wider scale there needs to be a change in the curriculum and modes of teaching to accommodate diverse groups of people (DoE 1997; see also Badat 2007).

Given the challenges facing the transformation process and the imperatives to change, the quality of teaching has come to be regarded as very important especially in the context of apartheid legacies, and a globalising and technologically advancing world. In recognition of the importance of teaching to the transformation process both in higher education institutions and in the nation, several teaching and learning excellence awards were created, the aim being to promote quality teaching and changing the culture of teaching in higher education (CHE 2012). These award systems were introduced in 2009 to 'raise awareness' of the role played by teaching in transforming higher education and its tradition has been recognised and carried on by universities in South Africa (CHE 2012). Apart from the awards a number of universities, in recognition of the need for excellence in teaching, created staff development programmes to ensure improved quality in teaching. The National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 further highlights the need for a curriculum transformation to meet the needs of the changing student body in various higher education institutions (Fourie 1999, 283).

Recognising the importance of teaching and learning to higher education transformation, Rhodes University introduced the Vice Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award to inspire excellence in teaching and recognise exceptional lecturers in different fields of study. Teaching portfolios were introduced as an important mechanism for engendering quality teaching and incorporating teaching as a criterion for promotion of existing lecturers and confirmation of new lecturers (CHERTL Annual Report 2013; 2015). Furthermore, a number of development programmes have been created to assist staff with the development of their teaching expertise (CHERTL Annual Report 2013; 2015). The University's Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) exists to

improve teaching and learning in the University, to contribute to the development of staff and the promotion and assurance of quality in teaching and learning and the development of service learning as a component of teaching which contributes to the wider transformation of the University and of society (CHERTL Annual Report 2013; 2015). The Centre promotes service learning within the institution and administers a number of academic development programmes.

Despite these various efforts, policies and institutions created to foster transformation and change in teaching and the curriculum, many higher education institutions still face numerous challenges, one of which is the lack of development and support for teachers especially in historically disadvantaged institutions (Mahomed 2004). Mahomed argues that the lack of training and support for teachers and the lack of resources to carry out such change has affected the transformation of teaching and learning (Mahomed 2004, 3; see also Ogude, Nel and Oosthuizen 2005). Hlengwa (2014, 2) further argues that the imperative to change the curriculum in historically white universities is impeded by the institutional cultures in these universities. For example, she notes that Rhodes University's institutional culture incorporates an enabling discourse of excellence, high success rates and research output, which can be used as a means of refusing the pressure to change its curriculum and transform pedagogical approaches (Hlengwa 2014, 63).

2.6 Community Engagement

In the context of eradicating discrimination and reconstructing the higher education landscape, community engagement and research have also been identified as cornerstones of transformation. There has been a call for universities to move out of their ivory towers and engage with their various contexts through research and individual participation in surrounding communities (Fourie 1993). This means universities ought to engage with the socio-political and economic challenges that face the people in the society in which the university is located (Fourie 1993, 284). The Educational White Paper, in setting out the agenda for higher education transformation further recognised the contribution higher education institutions need to make in terms of research and community engagement to the development and transformation of South African society (DoE 1997). This was further emphasised by the National Plan for Higher Education and the Higher Education Act, in 2001. The NPHE notes the need for universities to respond to the national needs through research and community engagement (MoE 2001). The need for higher education institutions to make available programmes that will deal with and focus on the social, political, economic and cultural needs of the nation has also been highlighted (CHE 2006). In South Africa community engagement has been

infused with research and teaching in higher education and this led to the introduction of a service-learning component into many university courses (CHE 2006, 11). Service learning is seen as a means through which the university can engage with communities through teaching and research. This form of interaction is argued to be beneficial to both the community and students (Badat 2013, 5). Apart from service learning, community engagement in higher education in South Africa has taken several other forms including community service by academic staff and participatory action research (CHE 2006, 11).

In the context of such policies and the identification of the central role of community engagement in the transformation process, Rhodes University has highlighted community engagement as one of its three pillars defining its purpose. In 2005 Rhodes University created its community engagement policy. The policy notes the University's commitment to the promotion of community service and the inclusion of service-learning to benefit the community and students with the aim of generating graduates who have a sense of civic responsibility (Rhodes University Community Engagement Policy, 2005). Service-learning was thus introduced in 2005 as a component of some courses (Community Engagement Policy 2005). The University also created the community engagement award to recognise both staff and students engaged in community service. The community engagement awards are given yearly to both staff and students who show dedication to working with the community. Staff and students are engaged in a variety of community service projects around Grahamstown. For instance, Upstart is a development and empowerment project that provides high school students with the opportunity to access limited resources and participate in a variety of educational enrichment activities. Some staff members and students also work with the Grahamstown Area Distress Relief Association (GADRA) Education, an NGO that works with disadvantaged learners to ensure that they graduate and have better employment prospects (Rhodes University Community Engagement website). In addition, there are some 16 different organisations which collaborate with staff and students to provide services to the Grahamstown community through teaching and research (Rhodes University Community Engagement website).

Existing research has however noted that despite the stated commitment to community engagement in many universities' mission statements, these are not consistent with practice (Hall 2010, 4). For instance Lazarus (2007, 94) notes that in 1999, only one University had community engagement included as a core function in the three year rolling plans submitted by universities to the Department of Education. He also noted inconsistency of most universities' mission statements with practice,

arguing that there was no real commitment to, or strategies to, implement these policies (Lazarus 2007, 91; Lazarus *et.al* 2008, 58). Similarly, Hall notes that the audit reports between 2004 and 2008, show that universities are at various levels in their conception of community engagement, arguing that the lack of connection between policy and practice is a 'consequence of the self-interest of inherently conservative institutions' especially in a context like South Africa where apartheid legacies are deeply entrenched in its structures and cultures (Hall 2010, 5). Hall's argument points to a need to address an underlying problem, one that an increase in participation rates and a change in demographics and representation cannot provide a solution to.

2.7 Research

Engaged research is an important aspect of higher education transformation. In the context of transformation, universities have been encouraged to transform their cultures of research and the composition of those who are research active. Waghid (2002, 459) notes that the transformation of higher education involves the 'creation of new knowledge, seeing new problems and imagining new ways of approaching old problems'. Hence transformation goes beyond changing the demographics of students or increasing representation of Black academic staff in universities. Waghid (2002, 477) also highlights the need for universities to engage in research that opens up possibilities for addressing the socio-political and economic problems in the nation and the inclusion of problem oriented research. Furthermore, given the legacies of apartheid there is a need to produce new knowledge and rethink those discourses that enabled the oppression, discrimination and exclusion of certain groups in South Africa. The National Plan for Higher Education (2001) notes that research is 'perhaps the most powerful vehicle for the development of democracy in South Africa'. CHET research output reflects an increase in research of universities in South Africa (CHET 2014[7]). This reflects an improvement from the findings of the Council on Higher Education Size and Shape Task Team which noted the low research output of institutions and that in 1998, about 65% of all publications recognised for subsidy purposes were produced by only six of the 21 universities (CHE 2000).

While Rhodes is a relatively small University, it has been recognised as one of the research producing universities in South Africa. The Ministerial Report on National Research Progress recognises Rhodes as having the third most favourable research per-capita output in South Africa (Rhodes Research Report 2012). Also, academic staff with PhD qualifications increased from 43% in 2006 to

[7] Higher education performance indicators data

57% in 2013 (Rhodes Research Report 2013). In the University, research is closely tied to community engagement with the term 'engaged research' being frequently used by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research. He notes for instance that 'the impact of engaged research is to empower all people in their respective environments to work towards developing a sustainable lifestyle' (Clayton n.d.). The research success of Rhodes has been recognised nationally. In 2012, the University had five new South African Chairs Initiative[8] (SARChi) which represented 8.3% of the total number of awards made. Despite the successes recorded by the University, it still has to grapple with the challenges facing research output in the national context especially with respect to -- the production of the next generation of researchers, the disparity of research between HWU's and HBU's and the low level of research productivity. There is also very little that is known about the nature of the research produced and whether it can be said to be contributing to a re-orientation of the production of knowledge in ways that are in keeping with, or antithetical to, the wider transformation agenda.

There is a great disparity among universities as much of the research is produced by a small number of universities in the country, with White and male researchers still dominant with respect to research productivity. There is a nation-wide challenge to build the next generation of research, but with the low number of PhD graduates (see Badat 2010, 18), it is nearly impossible to meet this need. Despite the research output in South Africa being one of the highest in Africa, most of the publications are emanating from only five universities which produce more than 60% of the subsidy earning publications annually (CHE 2009, 48; DHET 2014). It is perhaps also worth noting that these research producing universities are traditionally white universities while the others focus more on undergraduate teaching and produce very little research (CHE 2009, 57; DHET 2014). This pattern reflects the effects of apartheid legacies on the University context. In addition, only 10% of the academics in higher education are rated researchers with most being White and male and just 15% are Africans and 28% are women (CHE 2009, 57). A 2002 study shows the level of racial disparity with 90% of research produced by White authors located mainly at traditionally White universities (CHE 2009, 58). An indication of the disparity in research at South African universities is reflected in the table below which research outputs of selected universities in South Africa as at 2013.

[8] The South African Research Chairs Initiative was established in 2006 by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF). The goal of this initiative was to promote research and innovation in South African universities (NRF website http://www.nrf.ac.za/division/rcce/instruments/research-chairs)

Table 11: Research Outputs at South African Universities

University	University Type	Overall research output
UKZN	HBU/HWU	11.6%
UP	HWU	11.5%
UCT	HWU	11.1%
WITS	HWU	9.3%
UNISA	HWU	7.4%
UJ	HWU	6.4%
RU	HWU	3.2%
UFH	HBU	1.7%
UL	HBU	1.2%
WSU	HBU	0.3%
Total National Outputs - Units		14008.67

DHET 2015, *Report on the Evaluation of the 2013 Universities Research Publication Output*

The figures above reveal one of the difficult challenges facing higher education institutions in South Africa with a large percentage of research being produced by traditionally White universities. Also, in addition to the low numbers of female researchers, the Council for Higher Education noted that most women are more likely to co-author a paper than author it alone (CHE 2009, 59). The race and gender disparity especially regarding the production of research reveals a deeper structural problem, one that can only be addressed by a complete overhauling, restructuring and transformation of the structures and institutional cultures of universities.

2.8 Institutional Structures and Cultures

Given the history of South Africa and the role higher education played in the enactment of apartheid policies, one aspect of the transformation debate has focused on the need for structural and cultural change (Blunt and Cunningham 2002; Eckel 2001; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007, 396; Hemson and

Singh 2010, 937). In the last 20 years of democracy, there has been policies aimed at transformation. Despite various efforts taken to ameliorate the effects of apartheid however, the literature still notes the lack of transformation on a structural level (Portnoi 2009; Soudien 2010; Ferrer-Balas et al 2008). This gives rise to differences in participation, graduation rates, and the highly-skewed nature of the racial component of academic staff in most universities (Soudien 2010; Ferrer-Balas et al 2008; DoE 2008). For Soudien (2010) the available figures reveal the deep structural discrimination as exclusion persists despite demographic change. He argues that from the moment of provision of access these groups are effectively excluded: 'when it does take them in, it is unable to realise their aspirations; it effectively conspires to exclude them' (Soudien 2010).

Structures here are defined not just as the physical buildings within the institution but also include the network of relations among individuals within the institution. These structures (networks of relations) are very complex and have been defined as both limiting and enabling to individuals in that institution (Archer 1995). Moreover, these structures and structural relations have been described as very rigid and difficult to change allowing mostly for reproduction/morphostasis rather than change/morphogenesis (Archer 1995; Callinicos 2004; Hay 2002).

Structures also refers to the 'rules of the game' that prevail in any setting and which reflect the different modes of power in operation and the ways in which they construct the life of both staff and students (Hemson and Singh 2010, 937), shaping choices and possibilities for what is and is not thinkable in any moment. The existence of apartheid legacies moreover mean that these rules, practices and modes of power are raced, gendered and classed. Hence, for transformation to happen, it has been argued that universities must develop a new set of rules that will inform academic life in ways that accommodate and incorporate the diverse experiences of individuals in the university rather than reflecting the dominance of particular world views (Hemson and Singh 2010).

However, it has been noted (see for instance Cassim 2006, 229, 230; Howell and Lazarus 2003, 61; Soudien 2010) that these structures and cultures are very difficult to change and change will meet with resistance. As a result, the process of transforming structures has been a very difficult and slow one (see Soudien 2010; Govinder, Zondo and Makoba 2013; Portnoi 2009). While some universities claim to be making progress regarding transformation in terms of demographics, there has been less success at the level of changing institutional structures, cultures and discriminatory micro practices

embedded in universities (Cassim 2006, 429). Subtle forms of discrimination in these structures are difficult to identify in concrete terms although their effects are felt daily (Soudien 2010).

Change is challenging and the rigidness of existing structures often makes it difficult for individuals to act as agents and make choices which might be termed 'transformatory' because they interrupt the rules of the game in some way and bring about new practices, epistemologies and ways of being. Thus, changes remain at a superficial level, in reality leaving intact important features of the status quo regardless of the intentions of policies and individual agents (Portnoi 2009).

Apart from the need to change structures, scholars have highlighted the importance to the transformation process of cultural change in universities (Niemann 2010; Cassim 2006; van Wyk 2004; Ferrer-Balas *et al* 2008; Shackleton, Riordan and Simonis 2006; van Wyk 2004). What stands out in many South African universities as noted by John Higgins (2007, 106) is the extent to which the institutional cultures of these universities are closely tied to racial identities (see also van Wyk 2004, 168; Portnoi 2009; Walker 2005; Bhana 2016; Seekings 2008; Pattman 2007) and serve to perpetuate disenchantment, discrimination and alienation (Niemann 2010, 1004). For instance Bhana (2016, 18) argues that 'institutional cultures and the informal university climate are fertile environments for the production and reproduction of inequitable power relations'. Thus there is need to transform cultures and practices that reproduce inequalities and discrimination.

There is consensus among scholars that institutional culture may be the key to institutional transformation in South Africa (Higgins 2007). Central to the discussion is the need for universities to shift from a culture of discrimination and exclusion to one of inclusion. As noted in chapter one, institutional culture refers to 'the way things are done within an organisation, which reveals itself in its traditions, customs, values and shared understandings; the practices engaged in and those practices that are rewarded and supported' (Rhodes University Equity Policy 2004, 4). Niemann (2010, 1017) further defines institutional cultures as shared values and beliefs as well as the more tangible elements of what binds the group together such as the physical environment, shared symbols, artefacts, institutional stories, role models, practices, rituals and ceremonies.

Research suggests that existing institutional cultures are experienced as hostile by Black and female members of institutions (Mabokela 2001; Cassim 2006; Stanley 2006). Some scholars (see for instance Mabokela 2001) therefore argue that as part of changing the institutional cultures of

universities, universities should create supportive environments for marginalised groups so as to minimise the effects of hostile institutional cultures. So, a part of changing the institutional cultures in these universities, scholars argue, is that the 'work cultures' for example 'the relationship amongst staff members' and the availability of resources to these individuals should also be the focus of universities attempting to transform (Mabokela 2001; Cassim 2006).

Hence transformation involves not just addressing structures and including disadvantaged groups, it also involves changing 'the rules of the game' to include the experiences of those with different backgrounds, ways of knowing and being. This will involve developing a different set of rules that will inform institutional and academic life (attitudes, perceptions, practices) and ensuring that it is not comfortable only for those with specific social identities and alienating for others (Hemson and Singh 2010, 937; Portnoi 2009; 382).

Portnoi (2009, 382) argues than an important part of changing institutional cultures is changing the mind-sets of those within the institution especially those of the previously dominant groups. Fourie (1999, 277) further highlights the importance of having shared values in an institution, and argues that if all the members of the institution understand what the shared values are then they will act in accordance with those values. She notes that these shared values give the institution its sense of identity (see also Ogude, Nel and Oodthuizen 2005). Hence transformation is not just about changing numbers and demographics, governance structures or the curriculum, it is also about transforming cultures and developing new and shared values and ways of doing and being (Fourie 1999, 277). This, Fourie (1999, 277) argues, can be only achieved if the mind-sets of all the stakeholders and role-players is changed (Ogude, Nel and Oodthuizen 2005).

It has been further noted that universities' failure to recognise the importance of institutional culture to transformation will result in academic staff leaving unwelcoming institutions (Portnoi 2009, 383; Hemson and Singh 2010; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007, 390). Also, students who lack the cultural and social capital to cope with the existing institutional cultures may end up dropping out from such institutions (Portnoi 2009, 383; Hemson and Singh 2010; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007, 390). Badat (2015) thus argues that recruiting and retaining Black academic staff cannot be removed from the question of institutional cultures and the experiences of discrimination, disempowerment and discomfort which take a personal, psychological and academic toll on individuals. For Niemann (2010, 1019) building a new institutional culture involves 'collaboration, solidarity, equal

participation opportunities, support from leaders and colleagues, fellowship and friendship, ethical leadership, community engagement, an environment without stereotyping and prejudices, a conducive work environment and ample opportunities to socialise and grow personally and professionally'.

The existing cultures of historically white institutions have been described as characterised by a culture of whiteness. Higgins (2007) describes whiteness as the:

> ensemble of cultural and subjective factors that together constitute the unspoken dominance in higher education of western, European or Anglo-Saxon values and attitudes as these are reproduced and inflected in South Africa. This whiteness is or can be experienced as an alienating and disempowering sense of not being fully recognised in or by the institution, and a consequent impossibility of feeling 'at home' within it.

This reflects the experiences of many marginalised groups (both staff and students) in especially historically white universities in South Africa. Lewin (2010, 130) argues that universities' refusal to acknowledge and deal with 'normative standards' and 'cultural attributes' associated with whiteness and patriarchy creates an inhospitable and unwelcoming culture where certain groups continually feel excluded (see also Kistner 2011). The MCTHEI characterised institutional cultures as inhospitable as a result of racial discrimination, harassment, sexism, a pervading sense of whiteness, colour blindness and an aspiration to western ideals with many of the institutions refusing to acknowledge the realities faced by marginalised individuals (DoE 2008. The report further argued that many universities are characterised by a culture of silence, fear and victimization and that in this context the refusal to acknowledge the experiences of marginalised groups breeds anger and frustration (DoE 2008). Discourses of 'excellence', and 'best fit' serve as foils for race used to select those who will prove least disruptive to the prevailing norms (Badat 2015; Portnoi 2009, 382). Portnoi (2009, 382) argues for example that using 'who is best' selection criteria will end up privileging White candidates due to the invisibility of whiteness as a valued norm (Higgins 2007, 109). Because of this invisibility there is a failure to recognise how prejudice is perpetuated based on standards that parade as universal but are in reality raced, classed and gendered (see Steyn and van Zyl 2011; see also Pattman 2007).

To overcome this cultural discrimination and alienation experienced by marginalised groups especially Blacks and women, some have argued for the 'Africanisation' of higher education institutions especially regarding the curriculum (Fourie 1999; Assié-Lumumba 2006; Ajayi 1996; Ogude, Nel and Oosthuizen, 2005; Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo 2006; Bhana 2016). These

scholars argue that the Africanisation of higher education institutions means the recognition and inclusion of non-Western knowledge systems (Assié-Lumumba 2006, 99; DoE 2008; Ogude, Nel and Oosthuizen 2005, 10; Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo 2006, 77), affirming and validating rather than marginalising and excluding African perspectives. As the MCTHEI notes, the 'local context must become the point of departure for knowledge-building in universities across the world' (DoE 2008, 92); and as Makgoba (2004, 8) puts it:

> Our African-ness gives us access to a powerful and liberating consciousness, one that is worth reclaiming, defending and promoting … an intellectual focus and institutional ethos which can give Africa, and South Africa, a competitive advantage on the world stage.

Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo (2006, 71) argue that in keeping with transformation ideals, many universities changed their mission and vision statements to include words like 'first class African university', 'premier African scholarship', and world class African university' but that this perspective as is reflected in many mission statements and policies does not translate into the institutional cultures and structures of these institutions. As a result, African cultures and ways of knowing continue to be marginalised. Furthermore, such perspectives may privilege western ways of knowing and being and African cultures and ways of knowing may continue to be marginalized as a result. Resistance to attempts to Africanise often takes the form of the claim that knowledge is universal which is an aspect of the invisibility and dominance of whiteness. Steyn and Van Zyl (2011, 68) argue for instance that a discourse of 'educational standards and internationalism' legitimises whiteness.

2.9 Leadership

The importance of leadership to the transformation process has been highlighted by existing research on transformation (see for instance Van der Westhuizen 2006; Portnoi 2009; Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Niemann 2010; Viljoen and Rothmann 2002; van Wyk 2004; Soudien 2010; Ferrer-Balas et al 2008). These studies argue the university leaders play an important role in ensuring the transformation of their various universities. This suggests that the extent to which leaders and individual staff members have agency to effect transformatory practices determines the success of transformation policies.

The leadership of Rhodes University has in principle endorsed the transformation objectives set out in the Educational White Paper 3. It is however difficult to determine their commitment to these

objectives in practice. A range of policies have been approved which suggests support for transformation by the leadership of the institution. The Rhodes Six Year Transformation Report notes that the University Council supports transformation (2013, 13). However, the University's governing structure reveals the under-representation of especially Africans in the higher administrative ranks. Key University officers, deans and heads of departments are overwhelming White men. The Six Year report further notes that within the period of 2006 to 2011, the composition of Senate committees tended to be dominated by White men (Rhodes Six Year Report 2013, 24). The racial and gender composition of the Council consisted of 50 per cent Blacks and 21 per cent women in 2006 (Rhodes Six Year Report 2013, 24). Senate is still overwhelming White (81%) and male (72%) (Rhodes Six Year Report 2013, 24).

In a study on leadership and transformation in the United States Astin and Astin (2000) noted that good leadership engenders change and transformation in an institution, hence, leadership development is an important tool to enable academics to engage in the process of transformation. Transformation necessarily entails faculty members becoming involved in changing educational practices, curriculum content and teaching practices (see Akoojee and Nkomo 2007; Niemann 2010). Ferrer-Balas *et al* (2008, 301) note that leadership and the vision of a few individuals in influential positions has been a driver for transformation in some institutions and that when the academic staff is not on board with the transformation process, this often impedes progress.

2.10 Conclusion

While the higher education sector has made strides regarding transforming demographically, a critical challenge facing higher education is the reconstruction and transformation of the legacies of apartheid in the sector. Badat notes that despite the efforts that have been made towards transformation, decolonising, de-racialising and de-gendering South African higher education remains to be achieved (Badat 2009, 465-466). Relative to the population of the country, Black South Africans continue to be underrepresented and little or no attention is being paid to the issue of class especially in historically white institutions (Badat and Sayed 2014, 134-135).

In Rhodes University, the demographic proportions especially that of students reveal a massive change which indicated a move towards the transformation objectives, however the staff demographics do not show similar increase. As the Soudien Commission Report pointed out,

experiences of discrimination are still embedded in everyday relationships in ways that are not overt and are hence difficult to get at or grasp (DoE 2008). Understanding transformation is therefore not just about demographics but has to do with cultures and structures that allow for discriminatory attitudes, processes and practices to be re-inscribed in the present.

In the light of these studies indicating a change in the structures and cultures as necessities for transformation, the challenges of South African universities in terms of the rigid structures and cultures and the need for agency to ensure transformation, this study aims to understand how agency enables transformation. Since there is a tendency for structures to reproduce themselves, this project aims at revealing how such structures are transformed despite their rigid nature and in a South African context how deeply embedded racist and sexist structures are transformed. The following chapter examines the theoretical constructs of structure, agency and social change that inform the conceptual approach taken in the thesis.

3 Chapter

Conceptual Framework: Agency, Structure and Transformation

3.1 Introduction

Agency is defined as 'the capacity for humans to act in their own right'; it is a conscious goal directed activity (Anderson 1980, 19; Elder Vass 2010, 2; Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Giddens 1984). Agency is an individual's ability to exercise some degree of control over the social relations which they find themselves in. This further implies agency's reproductive as well as transformative capacities (see Archer 1995; 1996; 2004; Bhaskar 1979; Callinicos 2004; Elder-Vass 2010; New 1994; Sewell 1992; Giddens 1979; 1982; 1984). Agency is a necessity for social transformation as social structures do not just reproduce or transform themselves abstractly; such change is rather possible and seen through human action which is in turn influenced by social structures. As Karl Marx declared,

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past (Marx 1937, 6).

Archer describes the 'making of history' as a period of stability, one in which relations that tend to preserve, maintain or reproduce the cultural and structural systems within any given institution or organisation are analysed (Archer 2012, 5). The relationship between structure and agency and the human agent's capacity for action and the degree of limitation placed on such capacity for action by structural power or social structures is perhaps the central problem of social science (Sewell 1992). While agents have a capacity to act on their own free will, their ability to carry out such acts is dependent on their historical contexts and the social structures that prevail in such contexts. Scholars have long debated the relationship between agency and structure and the influence of structures on human agents' capacity to act (see Callinicos 2004, Elder Vass 2010, Giddens 1984; Jessop 1996; Hay and Wincott 1998; Giddens 1984; New 1994; McNay 1999; Mahmood 2001; 2005; Sewell 1992; Mahoney and Snyder 1999; Reed 1997; Ashwin 2009). On one end of the spectrum are scholars that emphasise the limiting nature of structures, and argue for the reduction of one into the other, scholars on the other end have argued for the conception of both as mutually constitutive of each other (see for instance Giddens 1984; 1979; Callinicos 1994; Anderson 1980; Archer 1995; Jessop 1996; Hay

2002; Butler in McNay 1990; Reed 1997, 31). While some have conceived of structure purely as limiting, others have argued that structures can be both limiting and enabling (Callinicos 2004 see also Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992; New 1994).

Structure here refers to a range of capabilities with inherent capacities, powers and properties that can be reproduced or transformed via human interaction. Structures can be taken to mean both physical and relational entities that operate via action. Collin Hay (2002, 94) defines structures as the setting in which social, political and economic events occur and acquire meaning. For Callinicos, they are power-conferring relations with explanatory autonomy; they are a set of empty spaces which endow individuals who occupy them with power and interests (Callinicos 2004, XXV, see also Hay 2002). Giddens (1979) sees structures as the 'unacknowledged and unanticipated consequences of human action', consisting of rules and resources which individuals draw on in social interaction. In contrast Archer and Bhaskar see structures as possessing emergent properties which necessarily pre-exist human action thus being able to influence human action by determining the context and position in which an individual is placed (Archer 1995; Bhaskar 1979). From the above definitions structures are not just physical/material entities but they are also immaterial as they form and shape the context in which we find ourselves and they do not just constrain but also enable human agency.

Agency on the other hand is an individual's ability to act despite constraining situations, to realise a goal. Callinicos notes that to be an agent is to be an organism to which beliefs and desires can be ascribed (Callinicos 2004, 152). Conceptions of agents do not differ much amongst scholars, frin Hays' definition;

> the notion of agency implies a notion of free will, choice and autonomy, reflexivity (the ability of the actor to consciously reflect on the consequences of previous action), rationality (the ability of the actor to select the best possible course of action with a full understanding of its consequences) and motivation (the desire with which an actor attempts to realise an intention) (Hay 2002, 95).

Perry Anderson suggests three definitions of agency, 'first is the kind of agency that is involved in the pursuit of private goals (choice of marriage, cultivation of a skill, cultivation of a plot and bestowal of name). He argues that these forms of agency are embedded in social relations, reproduce themselves and are maintained through long periods of history (Anderson 1980, 17). The institution of marriage for example has been normalised in our social reality so much that anything that threatens this institution is marginalised. The second kind of agency is involved in the pursuit of public goals

which can be either collective or individual (Anderson 1980, 19). This type of agency typically incorporates involvement in religious movements, political struggles, military conflicts, diplomatic transactions and cultural creations. Anderson argues such forms of agency are limited in scope and do not aim to transform social relations as such as they often occur within structural frameworks which the agents are often unaware of (Anderson 1980, 19). However, he argues that while social transformation may not be the aim of this kind of agency, it may yield unintended consequences. The third is the pursuit of collective projects aimed at social transformation', it involves conscious efforts aimed at changing the whole social structure and creating new social conditions (Anderson 1980, 20; Callinicos 2004, 2). It is the third type of agency that is the focus of the present project, one aimed at a complete change of oppressive dominant structures. In a South African context, this type of agency is aimed at transformation of the social structures, especially in higher education, that enable discrimination and exclusion. Given the tendency for structures to reproduce themselves, my interest is in how particular agents in a specific context are capable of acting in ways that produces/enables transformation.

3.2 The agency structure debate

As noted above several scholars have postulated different theories/approaches to explain the relationship between agency and structures. These approaches can be broadly divided into two categories, traditional approaches (characterised by structuralism and intentionalism) and contemporary approaches (analytical dualisms, the duality of structures and strategic-relational approaches). Traditional (reductionist) approaches have tended to privilege either the primacy of structures over agency or the primacy of agents/individuals. Scholars who argue for the reduction of structures to individual or agency have been referred to as intentionalist, voluntarist and individualist, while scholars who argue for the determining role of structures have been referred to as collectivist, holist and structuralist.

Methodological Individualism — intentionalism

Individualism is the explanation of social relations and outcomes in terms of individuals, contemporary explanations of the agency structure debate reject the reduction of structures to agents or individual arguing that this does not take into account the fact that while actions create structures, because these structures are continuous over time they become autonomous possessing separate powers that subsequently influence human action (Elster 1982; Lukes 1968; Hodgson 2007; Udehn

2002; see also Bhaskar 1979; Archer 1995; Giddens 1979; Callinicos 2004). Individualists' allow for societal structures to be explained in terms of the individual and individual actions, the argument being that individuals create structures which in turn are only revealed when the individual acts. Scholars with this approach include Weber, Jon Elster, Daniel Dennett, Hobbs, Mills, Watkins and Popper; they give primacy to individuals, individual actions and interactions (see Callinicos 2004, 5; Lukes 1968, 119; Agassi 1960, 244; 1975, 144). Karl Popper for instance in *The Open Society and its Enemies: The Spell of Plato* argues that,

> all social phenomena and especially the functioning of all social institutions, should always be understood as resulting from the decisions, actions, attitudes etc. of human individuals, we should never be satisfied by an explanation in terms of so-called collectives (states, nation, race etc.) (Popper 1966, 98).

While for Jon Elster, methodological individualism is the doctrine;

> ...that all social phenomenon (their structure and their change) are in principle explicable only in terms of individuals (their properties, goals and beliefs) (Elster 1982, 453)

Methodological individualists argue that it is the individual that makes the decision to produce and reproduce and transform their interaction, which determines structures and the distribution of resources (Arrows 1994, 3; Lukes 1968, 120-123; Agassi 1960, 244; 1975, 144). For example, when we speak of structures for instance, schools, we are speaking about students, lecturers and when we speak about armies we are speaking in terms of soldiers as these individuals are the component parts of such structures. Likewise, when structures are spoken of in terms of interests (national interests) or policy (public policy), they are merely a combination of the individual interests or policy of the nation (see Agassi 1960, 245). This does not however suggest that only individuals are observable as both individuals and structures have observable features and individuals do not exist independently of structures. The argument is that when these observable or unobservable structures are to be explained socially, they can only be explained in terms of individuals (Lukes 1968, 122). Therefore, any argument that does not uphold the primacy of individuals in the social context must be rejected, hence Popper's assertion. The argument for individualism is on the basis for game theory where the onus is on the individual to select the best possible means of the strategies available to her. Seen this way any outcome is entirely dependent on the individual's decisions and choices (Elster 1982, 453; Arrows 1994, 4). Social interaction both structural and individual can be reduced to individualistic explanations as the individuals are both the creators and the medium through which they are expressed.

This approach has however been criticised by several scholars (see for instance Archer 1995; Giddens 1979; Bhaskar 1979; 1998; Callinicos 2004), the argument being that the assertion that all social phenomena are explicable in terms of individuals and individual interaction cannot be true as there are structural properties that are outside of, and prior to, the modification of individuals and in fact influence individual actions. These scholars have argued that methodological individualism involves a form of methodological bracketing of structural capacities as elements of action (Giddens 1979, 95; Archer 1995; Callinicos 2004; Bhaskar 1979, 28). Archer for instance argues that the reduction of structures to individuals does not allow for a proper examination of structural emergent properties which does not allow for a detailed account of social change because structures are then rendered powerless and dormant (Archer 1995, 80).

Methodological collectivism/ structuralism/holism

Collectivists argue against individualism, that structures rather than individuals should form the basis of explanation for individual actions and social effects. In this view, society is more than a collection of individuals as structures possess emergent powers (emergent powers here mean that structures have irreducible properties) (Agassi 1960, 244; 1975, 145; Bhaskar 1979, 30; Callinicos 2004, XXVIII). The argument for the primacy of structures over individual actions can be traced to Durkheim who emphasised the concept of the group; he argues that social behaviours can be explained in terms of the collective as structures have properties irreducible to the individual (Durkheim in Bhaskar 1979, 30). These scholars argue that the aims, objectives and interests of individuals do not constitute the society rather they depend on the society (Agassi 1960, 244). Here the idea of structures as limiting is argued as they are seen as imposing a constraint on the individual's ability to act. These scholars argue that while the society is made up of different parts, that is, individuals, to form a whole that whole becomes more powerful than the individual and can determine action (Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier 2002; Agassi 1960; 1975). Social forces or structures then create decisions instead of individuals; and group formations, group interests and policies are relevant to the explanation of social change (Agassi 1975, 145).

Archer amongst other scholars however argues that both individualism and collectivist/holist arguments fail for the same reasons, as they conflate agency and structure either upwardly or downwardly (Archer 1995, 80; see also McNay 2003, 142). She argues that if this is the case, then the dormant concept loses its power and is unable to influence the central element, thus precluding

an adequate explanation of social reproduction and change/transformation (Archer 1995, 80). Given this critique of both methodological individualism and collectivism and their inadequacy of (alone) providing an adequate explanation for social change, scholars have attempted to forge a link between the two approaches. Peter Berger for instance argues that rather than think of structures and agents or society and individuals as separate with one having primacy over the other they should be viewed as constitutive of each other where the society forms the individual who creates society -- the two cannot then stand on their own (see Bhaskar 1979, 32). This approach is similar to that of Giddens' theory of structuration (I discuss this later), which argues that agency and structures are mutually constitutive (see Giddens 1979; 1984; 1982). Archer and Bhaskar however argue that this conception still does not provide an adequate theory for the explanation of agency and structures as it combines the errors of methodological individualist and methodological collectivists and does not allow for the examination of the interplay between agency and structures (Bhaskar 1979, 32; Archer 1995, 81).

In the following sections, I discuss the contemporary approaches to the agency/structure debates focusing specifically on Roy Bhaskar, Margaret Archer and Anthony Giddens' theory of structure and agency. Other scholars such as Alex Callinicos and Bob Jessop and Colin Hays will be further discussed but for the most part, their argument draw from the former scholars. These conceptions of agency and structure recognise the impact social context has on the ability of agents to act or the capacity for human action and the outcome of such action, as actions have both intended and unintended consequences (Callinicos 2004, 36; Anderson 1980, 17; see also New 1994, 188; Coole 2005, 126; Hay and Wincott 1998, 955; Mahmood 2001; 2005; Sewell 1992, 20). As New (1994, 188) argues that as agents we are born into specific structures and social positions, none of which is our choice and such positions has its own set of opportunities and restrictions (see also Sewell 1992).

Rather than focus on one theory or theorist this framework discusses various arguments and extracts concepts from them which may be useful for analysis. Given the above argument for and against exclusively methodological individualist or collectivist approaches, it must be noted that, to say that society is made up of individuals is true and to say that there are structural conditions is also true. What is then needed is a threshold of concepts that provides a way of conceptualising the link between the two. What is perhaps most important to the agency and transformation debate is the recognition that individualism and individual experience/action cannot be taken as a fact or a given and that they will always operate within a specific social context and hence cannot be separated from that context

when it comes to explaining and understanding such individual experiences/actions (see Archer 1995).

Shari Stone-Mediatore (1998) in writing on the validity of experience, argues that narratives of experience should not be taken as truths, facts and evidence, seeing as they are always embedded in/affected by discourse. Rather they should be understood as partial and incomplete. Seen this way, enables an understanding of narratives of experience as a means by which the researcher can engage with 'tensions in experience', the different discourses whether dominant or marginalised that are embedded in narratives and the strategies through which they are produced and reproduced. Hence, I do not take human action and individual experience as facts and recognise that they are and will always be affected by social contexts and I do not take it to be fact that social contexts or structures determine action. The idea that neither structure nor agency can be reduced to the individual means that the experiences of my participants are taken in relation to the South African social context of apartheid in a historically white 'liberal' university, where being White or Black offers you a range of limited or enabling possibilities. In the same vein I do not take social context to be independent of human action, while acknowledging that social structure though made up of human action, influences this action and can differ between individuals.

Roy Bhaskar's Critical Realism

Bhaskar introduces a critical realist perspective to explain the link between agency and structure and perhaps provides a solution to the 'problem of agency'. While Bhaskar has written little on the subject of agency and structure itself, his writing has been used by other scholars for this purpose (Hay 2002, 122). Most significant of these works is Margaret Archer's focus on the agency structure problem/debate which draws from Bhaskar. It provides a more detailed and exhaustive account and theory on agency and structures than is found in Bhaskar's own work. She further provides an explanatory methodology for researchers on how to examine the link between structure and agency empirically (Archer 1995). But before elaborating on this I outline here an overview of Bhaskar's critical realism which argues against individualist and collectivist (reductionist) accounts for the way in which social relations and change can be explained (Bhaskar 1998). Bhaskar notes that both structures and agents have different emergent properties specific to them and it is this that precludes the explanation of structures in terms of individuals/agency as methodological individualists do (what he termed voluntarism) and agency in terms of structures as collectivists do (what he termed reification) (Bhaskar 1998). Emergence here is taken to mean that structure and agency are

'analytically separable and are factually distinguishable because they occupy and operate over different tracts of time' (Archer 1998, 65). The emergent properties of structures for instance are the fact that that they pre-exist actions and individual emergent properties are reflexivity, self-monitoring and the ability to act otherwise (Bhaskar 1998, 34; Archer 1998, 71).

Criticising methodological individualists Bhaskar (1998, 25) argues that in examining the relationship between agency and structure it is important to note that, 'societies are irreducible to people, social formations/structures are a necessary condition for any intentional act, their pre-existence establishes their autonomy as possible objects for scientific integration and their causal power establishes their reality'. That is, for any intentional act to take place, it must be within the context of structures, thus structures pre-exists action (as structures must pre-exist whatever action that is taking place) and this he argues entails a transformational model, as such actions necessarily change or reproduce the structure on which they act (Bhaskar 1998, 26, 34). Given this it can be argued that structures are mediated through human agency, thus the society can be seen not just as consisting of individuals or structures but a sum of the relations between agents and structures (Bhaskar 1998, 26). Following the critical realist position, Bhaskar notes that structures and agents are not two sides of the same coin as Giddens (1979) asserts (I discuss this below), or two moments of the same process but they are in fact unrelated dialectically and they refer to two different things (Bhaskar 1998, 32).

The Transformational Model of Human Activity

Following the critical realist position, Bhaskar argues that the fact that structures predates a particular action (as no action can take place without an existing structure or context), it follows then that human action entails a *transformational model* (Bhaskar 1998, 34). That is, given the fact that structures necessarily pre-exist action, any form of action undertaken by any human agent at any given time, either reproduces or transform such structures. Hence rather than argue that agents create structure, as Methodological Individualists do, we should view agents as reproducing and transforming structures (Bhaskar 1998, 33). If the society is already existent, any form of human activity either transforms or reproduces it (Bhaskar 1998, 33). It must be noted however that the argument that structures predate action is an ontological move by realists to enable the separation of structures and human action as concepts with differing properties. One could argue that human actions in the first instance created structures, but the focus here is on the existing structures, so that whatever action is initiated by individuals only happens within the existing structures (see Bhaskar 1998; Archer 1995; Shilling 2005). Archer for example argues that the fact that a given structure while being created by

a particular generation of actors as an unintended yet emergent consequence of their actions does not compromise the argument as such existing structures pre-exist the next generation (Archer 1995, 72). For example, the institution of marriage pre-exists us and the decision to marry or not, reproduces such an institution or modifies it thus whether we decide to marry or not 'marriage' as an institution still exists on an abstract (metaphysical) level and it is only when it is acted upon by individuals that the institution of marriage is revealed. Bhaskar further argues that if structures already exist prior to action, such action can only modify the structure and it is the totality of such actions that enables structural transformation (Bhaskar 1998, 33-34). Thus, structures then become something that can only be modified or transformed by human actors not created and they are only revealed and become operative when human action takes place (Bhaskar 1998, 33-34; see also Archer 1995, 72). Therefore, agency and structures, while different, cannot operate outside one another. 'Structures provide the necessary condition for intentional human action and intentional human action is a necessary condition for the existence and reproduction of social structures, such that agents cannot act without drawing upon structural properties whose existence depends upon their usage by agents (Bhaskar 1998, 34-37; Archer 1995, 13). Archer notes that while structure is only revealed through human action, it at the same time possesses the capacity to influence action, thus an agent's attempt to change structures simultaneously change that agent (Archer 1994, 11-75).

This points to the dual character of structures and action, as structures are the 'ever present conditions and the continually reproduced outcome of human agency -- what Bhaskar terms the duality of structures' — and human actions are the conscious production and unconscious reproduction of the conditions of production (what Bhaskar terms the duality of praxis) (Bhaskar 1998, 35). This approach bears similarity to that of Giddens but differs in the sense that Bhaskar sees structures and action as possessing a dual character. Bhaskar argues that people for the most part unconsciously reproduce or transform the structures within their contexts (Bhaskar 1998, 35). The fact that individuals unconsciously reproduce structures begs the question, what then are the conditions necessary for the transformation of structures? Given the fact that humans unconsciously reproduce or transform the structures in which they are embedded, Bhaskar argues that intentionality cannot be the basis of the explanation of social change. To reconcile the relationship between structure and agency, Bhaskar notes that structures can be both constraining and enabling. That is, while agency transforms structures, these structures impose limits on these actions but do not determine it, as actors exert specific influences on the outcome (Bhaskar 1998, 36; Archer 1995, 78-79). While it is true that

structures impose limits on human actions, there is a range of possibilities open to the actor from which s/he can choose and this is not determined by structures (Archer 1995, 90).

From the above, six conclusions can be drawn as the basis of Bhaskar's TMSA model:

1. Societies and structures cannot be reduced to individuals or their actions.
2. Individuals do not create structures because structures always pre-exist them, hence structures are a necessary element for any action.
3. Structures are only revealed when put into operation by agents, thus human action is a necessary condition for structures.
4. The society is a composition of structures and practices which individuals reproduce or transform.
5. Agency and structures are then separate entities possessing different causal powers and emergent properties but cannot exist independently of each other.
6. These causal powers establish their reality and enable a mode of connection between agency and structure.
7. Structures do not operate independently of the conception that agents have of what they are doing (Bhaskar 1998, see also Archer 1995).

The Morphogenetic Approach- Analytical Dualism

Margaret Archer adopts the critical realist position of Roy Bhaskar but offers a more elaborate theory for the analysis of the relationship between structure and agency -- what she terms 'the morphogenetic approach'. This approach enables the examination of the interplay between structure and agency without sinking one into the other, the argument being that a proper incorporation of time is needed for the structure/agency problem to be satisfactorily resolved and an adequate explanation for agency and structure be provided (Archer 1995, 65). The use of analytical dualism as a method in the examination of the relationship between agency and structure recognises the equal independence of agents and structures, thus Archer writes:

> the argument for a separation of agency and structure is done not simply because ontologically they are indeed different entities with different properties and powers but because methodologically it is necessary to make the distinction between them in order to examine their interplay and thus be able to explain why things are so and not otherwise in the society (Archer 1995, 64).

The morphogenetic approach is an acknowledgement of the fact that a society has no pre-set form and it takes its shape from the intended and unintended consequences of human activities (Archer 1995, 5). Archer argues in line with Bhaskar that early attempts to conceptualise the link between agency and structure sought to explain one in terms of the other or reduce one to the other and conflate the two, what she termed, upward, downward and central conflation (Archer 1995, 61; see also McNay 2003, 142). Against conflation, she argues that these approaches do not provide a satisfactory explanation of the relationship between structure and agency as each explanation is one sided (Archer 1995, 4). Her argument is underpinned by a realist ontology which supports the existence of irreducible emergent properties, hence the argument that structures and agents have separate emergent properties, and thus must be separated for the purpose of examination (Archer 1995). Her argument draws from the belief that structural properties are abstract until they are taken up by actors and because they possess different properties, they operate over different tracts of time (Archer 1995).

The introduction of the element of time into the analysis of structure and agency is by no means a new move by scholars of agency/structure. Giddens (1979) for instance discusses the element of time in his analysis of the agency/structure problem, however for Archer the time period here is one that happens over a longer time frame (Archer 1995). That is, the process of transformation/reproduction of structures does not take place in one instance but over a long period of time within a specific context. Hence her argument that structures pre-date the actions which transform them and the transformed structures post-date those actions which led to their transformed state (Archer 1995, 72). However, the fact that structures pre-exist action, does not mean that they determine human action as while actions are conditioned, the decision power including the power to refuse, is in the hands of the agent (Archer 1995). She further argues that not only is the structure changed in the process of social transformation, the agent is also changed during relations between structures, structural condition, and social interaction (Archer 1995).

Archer's argument, which advocates analytical dualism, asserts that both structures and agents have different emergent properties which enable the examination of their interplay over a long period of time (Archer 1995, 66). The approach separates agency and structures in order to identify them independently of their individual occupant, yet showing their effect upon actors during social interaction and providing an account of the outcome which is either a reproduction (morphostasis) or transformation (morphogenesis) of the original structure (Archer 1995, 167-168). Rather than an

interpretative approach, analytical dualism/the morphogenetic approach, advocates an explanatory approach (Bieler and Morton 2001).

The Morphogenetic Cycle: the interplay between structure and agency

The morphogenetic cycle explains how transformation or change in a given structure happens. The basic assertion of this approach is that at any given time T^1, structure is the result of prior social relations conditioned by a prior social context, hence while the structures pre-exist as unintended consequences of previous social interaction, they can also affect subsequent action (Archer 1995, 175-176). For Archer, this process of change happens over three stages, the first T^1 being the context into which an agent is born. As structures pre-date action, these prior structures place the agents in differing positions, endowing them with vested interests (Archer 1995, 90). Therefore, structures have constraining and enabling influences which are not reducible to the practice of agents as the agents do not play a role in determining the context into which they are born (Archer 1995, 90). The next phase is one in which social interaction, T^2 and T^3 takes place. During this time actors are able to also exert influences on structures amidst their constraints or enablements (Archer 1995, 90). Archer argues that this situation of enablements and constraints creates different interpretation and patterns where those who experience the enabling conditions seek to reproduce such structures and those experiencing the constraining sides seek to change or transform such structures (Archer 1995, 90). The results of this or the outcome of transformation/change or reproduction is dependent on the integration/concession or conflicts within the social system and the final outcome (reproduction or transformation) is T^4 (Archer 1995, 91) – as shown in figure one below:

Structural conditioning

Tl _____

Social interaction

T2_____ T3

Structural elaboration

_____T4

Figure 1: The morphogenesis of structure, Archer 1995, 193.

Socio-cultural conditioning of groups

Tl _____

Group interaction

T2_____ T3

Group elaboration

_____T4

Figure 2: The morphogenesis of agency, Archer 1995, 194.

Archer's theory of structure (1995, 169) is based on the following propositions/assumptions:

1. There are internal and necessary relationships within structures (SS).
2. These structures (SS) exert causal influences on social interaction (SI).
3. There are causal relationships between groups and individuals at the level of social interaction.
4. Due to social interaction, there is an elaboration of the current structures with two possible outcomes -- morphogenesis/transformation (modification/introduction of new structures) and morphostasis/reproduction (structures are maintained).

These contexts into which we are born, which are enabling or constraining, come with different interests (which makes the individual want to maintain/reproduce the status quo or transform/change) according to our positions in relation to the social structure (Archer 1995, 253). These conditions of enablement and constraint must be acted upon by agents to be effective socially, as they give an agent reasons for pursuing reproduction or transformation. While structures do not determine action, they influence agents by creating an array of possibilities/opportunities which must be weighed by the agents (Archer 1995, 253). Archer argues that these 'weighers cannot be pre-programmed by nature or nurture, otherwise, weights and measures would be standard across society and constant for the individual, when manifestly they are not' (Archer 1995, 253). That is, while structures divide/place

individuals in different groups with different interests which gives them an array of possibilities to choose from, they do not determine action. It is dependent on the agent to make the decision on which course to choose by weighing the opportunity costs of each possibility in line with their interests and such ability to weigh is not dependent on any structure or pre-set by structural conditions. This reveals the emergent properties possessed by agents. The outcome of weighing leads to a reproduction (morphostasis) or transformation (morphogenesis) which, as seen from the above, is the result or product of the actions of agents (social agency). Such transformation or social elaboration does not just replace the current structures but 'introduces a new host of possibilities' (Archer 1995, 70). Archer however notes that while transformation or reproduction is the outcome of human agency in relation to structural conditions, that outcome is never precisely what anyone wants it to be. This is because it is characterised by concessions and compromises in the middle phase, and consequences may thus (often) be unintended (Archer 1995, 254). Archer further notes that while agency transforms structures, at the same time, it is also transformed during this process of working for change or reproduction (Archer 1995, 254).

The Structuration Theory

The structuration theory was postulated by Anthony Giddens to analyse the relationship between agency and structure, critiquing dualistic theories as a way of examining the relationship between agency and structure. Giddens argues that the structuration theory involves the duality of structure (Giddens 1979, 69; Giddens 1984, 16; Giddens 1982, 9; see also Cassell 1993). Rules and resources are integral to Giddens theory of the duality of structure. The basic argument in the duality of structure is that when an action is taken, the actor draws upon rules and resources to enable the actualization of an interest (Giddens, 1979; 1984; 1982). Structure here is defined as properties of social systems made up of rules and resources or transformation relations (the sum-total of the interactions between individuals within a specific structure and context), which is instantiated by action (Giddens 1984, 25, 377). Giddens suggests that we see structures as the 'unacknowledged conditions and unanticipated consequences of human action' as this resolves the dualism of structures (Giddens 1979, 69-70). This enables a focus on the duality of structures rather than dualism, duality meaning that 'the structural properties of social systems are both the medium and the outcome of the practices that constitutes those systems' (Giddens 1979, 70). In line with Bhaskar and Archer, Giddens rejects reductionist argument of the analysis of agency and structures, arguing that structures can be both seen as enabling and constraining (Giddens 1979, 70). That is while structures can sometimes limit

the actor's ability to act or take action, they can be enabling as they are involved in the production of action. Unlike Archer and Bhaskar who argue for the separation of agency and structure as they possess separate emergent properties, this approach argues for the inseparability of agency and structure as two sides of the same coin (Archer 1995, 93). The understanding is that structures (rules and resources) are only revealed when instantiated by actions and an examination of the relationship between agency and structures is to examine the structuring of action (Giddens 1979).

Giddens' main argument here is that structures and action cannot be separated because as actors draw on structures in the form of rules and resources to take a specific action, at the same time such actions reveal those structures, hence the argument that structures only exist virtually until instantiated by action. Therefore, the duality of structure is the medium (where actors draw on rules and resources) and outcome (where structures are revealed and transformed through interaction) of the conduct it organises (Giddens 1984, 374). The focus becomes not just structures or agents but how agents and structures continuously shape the context and effect change or transformation (Giddens 1984, 374). The analysis then focuses not on how structures separately or agents separately affect and change a given society or structures but how the two weave together to enable changes.

Historical Materialism: Agency and Structural capacities

Callinicos' account of how to conceptualise the relationship between agency and structure is similar to Giddens' account of the link between structure and agency as a simultaneous process. Callinicos however criticises Giddens for conceiving of structures as rules and resources in a given social system, his argument being that 'agents' structural capacity is determined by their relative access to productive resources and to power' (Callinicos 2004, 95, 275). Structures, for Callinicos then, have explanatory autonomy — while the agent has the power to act, such power is crucially dependent on the position of that actor in relation to production relations (Callinicos 2004, 100). That is, an individual's capacity for action, while partly determined by structures, is only possible if the position in which they find themselves gives them access to power and resources that enables them to act in such a way that creates change (see also Giddens 1984; Sewell 1992). Hence transformation depends on the array of possibilities available to an individual in a specific social context. This breaks with the idea of structures as merely limiting (Callinicos 2004, 275) and supports Giddens' argument that action and change yield intended as well as unintended consequences, rejecting the reduction of structures to the actions of agents (Callinicos 2004, 3-5). For Callinicos, structures or the social context of an actor plays an important role in their ability to act because such action is dependent on

the exercise of power which is determined by structures (Callinicos 2004, 56). Social structure implies a shifting set of power relations which individual agents interact with to either reproduce or transform existing social relations. This highlights the importance of structure in agency and the importance of agency for transformation. Aas Callinicos (2004, 94) argues, 'the explanation for social action (transformation) involves referring to both structures and individuals'. He defines social structure as a 'relation connecting persons, material resources, supra-individual entities and structures by virtue of which some persons gain power' (Callinicos 2004, xxiii; see also Sewell 1992; New 1994). That is, structures help to 'determine the powers that persons draw on when acting in the light of their beliefs and desires' (Callinicos 2004, 276). His acceptance of part of the 'orthodox conception of agents' as possessing beliefs and desires (see Callinicos 2004, 1) presents a break from Giddens' conception of agents.

The Strategic-Relational Approach

While Giddens, Archer, Bhaskar and Callinicos have argued for the separation or merging of structure and agency in the form of dualism or duality and access to power and resources to explain their relationship, other scholars for instance Bob Jessop and Collin Hay have argued that the use of dualisms or dualities in the explanation of agency and structures is not necessary as it is the relations between the two that needs examination. Here the argument is for the examination of the dialectical interplay and strategic relations between agency and structure to provide an explanation for how reproduction or transformation happens (Jessop 1996; Hay 2002).

This approach developed by Bob Jessop and expanded by Colin Hay attempts to transcend the dualism and duality proposed by Archer and Giddens, its argument being that the relationship between agency and structure is a purely analytical one and there are no dualisms or dualities involved (Jessop 1996, 124; Hay 2002, 127; Marsh 2010, 217). Jessop argues that any examination or analysis of the relationship between agency and structure must conceive of structures in 'strategic relational terms' involving structurally inscribed strategic selectivity — and action conceived as a performance by agents with a strategically calculating structural orientation (Jessop 1996, 124). This means that when analysing structures, structures must be conceptualised as strategic and action as performed by individuals who can 'strategically calculate' given the strategic nature of structures (Jessop 1996). Structures are then conceived of as enabling and constraining, creating opportunities as well as limiting the actor and they operate selectively and are specific to agents in a specific time frame (Jessop 1996, 124). In turn agents are reflexive and possess the capacity to reformulate amid enabling

and constraining conditions their identity and interests and can engage in strategic calculation about their context (Jessop 1996, 124).

This approach yields five major conclusions:

1. A given structural moment cannot be entirely changed by an agent at a specific time.
2. Dualisms and dualities are rejected.
3. A change in strategy by an actor can cause a shift from constraining conditions to enabling conditions and vice versa.
4. Actors possess the ability to reflect on their interests and identities, and thus can learn from experience which may lead to a change in strategy. Such change can either be transformative or reproductive.
5. Since structures are both constraining and enabling, the way in which power is viewed changes -- power is analysed by the 'attribution of specific acts by specific agents of responsibility for the realisation of a specific range of effects in specific contexts'. Power is then seen not as a principle of explanation but as an issue of attribution (Jessop 1996, 124-126).

Seen this way agency and structures are constitutive of each other and cannot be temporally separated (Hay 2002, 127). This approach is quite similar to Giddens' structuration theory which argues that structures and agents are like two sides of the same coin. However, the approach argues that rather than see them as two sides of the same coin, they should be conceived of as 'metals in the alloy from which a coin is forged' (Hay 2002, 127). Seen this way the need for examining structures and agency in terms of dualisms or two sides is removed as they are now infused into one another. If agents and structures are now infused what becomes visible is the outcome which may be intentional or unintentional (Hay 2002, 127; Marsh 2010, 218).

The strategic-relational approach does not take agents and structures to be real entities, hence they cannot exist independently of each other and cannot be temporally separated (Hay 2002, 127; Marsh 2010, 217). Put differently if the temporal feature of agency and structures is removed, then the need for separability is also removed -- they cannot operate at different times in the social system. Hay (2002, 127) however argues that the fact that they are not separable does not mean that an analysis equals the sum of the different parts (agential and structural factors). Giddens (1979) also makes this

argument. The strategic-relational approach thus argues for a view of structure and agency as 'the interaction between strategic actors and the strategic context within which they find themselves' (Hay 2002, 127). Given this the focus is then not on the interplay between structure and agents as separate entities but on the 'dialectical interplay of structure' (Jessop 1996, 124; Hay 2002, 127). That is, the focus shifts from an analytical dualism or the duality of structures to the relationship between 'strategic action' and 'strategic context' (Hay 2002, 127). The approach then advocated is for a double move of bringing agency into structures and repeating this with the outcome. It entails two levels:

1. Agency is brought into structure or infused into structure and the result is not agency subsumed in structure but a creation of an 'action setting' and structure is then brought into action to create a 'situated agent' or a 'contextualised actor'.
2. Once the action setting and situated agent have been created, the action is repeated with the action setting and situated agent, by bringing the situated actor back into the structural context and the structural context into the situated actor (Jessop 1996; Hay 2002, 128).

The result is a strategic actor and a strategically selective context (Jessop 1996) and the form of analysis that results from this is then not to do with the interplay between structure and agency but the interaction of strategic actors and the strategic context in which they find themselves (Hay 2002, 129). Underlying this is the assumption that agents internalise their perceptions of their contexts which then affects the agent's choices with respect to a specific course of action (Hay 2002, 129). The strategic relational approach bases its argument on the following which is similar to critical realist perspectives:

1. Actors are conscious, reflexive and strategic.
2. Actors are intentional but can/may act otherwise than how they do.
3. Actors can give reason for their actions.
4. Preference is not fixed and not wholly determined by structures or context.
5. Actors' context influences interests and preferences.
6. Actors can modify their interests with changing contexts (Hay 2002, 131; Jessop 1996, 124).

3.3 Conceptual Threshold

In the previous section I try to discuss various positions and approaches to the agency structure debate. The next section focuses on concepts drawn from these approaches discussed in the first section. The

concepts discussed below form a threshold for understanding both theory itself and the data generated for the present study. My analysis will incorporate the various concepts to enable an understanding of the theory of structure and agency through the data and the data through the theory. The idea of concepts as thresholds enables a conceptual engagement with the analysis of data (see McKenna 2016; Meyer and Land 2003; Kiley and Wisker 2009; Kiley 2009; Cousing 2006). These concepts are used in the context of understanding that there is a link between structures which affect practices and are in-turn affected by practices. I define structures as a set of social relations and interactions between various individuals and collectives in specific contexts which are governed by a set of rules, norms, rules, practices and discourses designed to make powerful certain groups and ways of being (see Callinicos 2004). These norms, rules, practices and ways of being are developed over time, they shape and guide human interactions in a specific social context. These sets of cultural and structural rules partly determine the form of reproduction/morphostasis and transformation/morphogenesis that occurs within that social system.

In line with hermeneutic phenomenology which acknowledges the role of pre-understanding in understanding the essence of a phenomenon, the use of a threshold of concepts opens up the possibility of understanding the essence of having agency to effect transformation. It also enables new ways of understanding a phenomenon (see Meyer and Land 2003; Mckenna 2016). Meyer and Land (2003, 1) describe these concepts as portals 'opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something…It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something' (see also Meyer and Land 2005). This new understanding is possible because conceptual thresholds enable the questioning of assumptions and widely held beliefs and the critique of dominant understandings (McKenna 2016). Moreover, the use of conceptual thresholds may resolve the problem of ontological and epistemological differences of scholars who have attempted to theorise agency. The use of threshold concepts enables the researcher to see the link between theory and the phenomenon being studied (Cousing 2006, 5; Meyer and Land 2003). Below I discuss seven concepts drawn from scholars who have examined the relationship between structure and agency namely; positions and practices, fields, roles, rules, resources, interests and power (see Archer 1995; Bhaskar 1998; Callinicos 2004; Giddens 1979), which will play the role of threshold concepts in the analysis of the data generated for the present study.

Positions and Practices

This concept draws on the work of Archer, Bhaskar, Giddens and Callinicos. Positions are occupied by individuals who reproduce and transform such positions. Structure and agency cannot be examined independently of each other but they are also relatively autonomous. Strucutres are continuously reproduced/transformed and are only operative through human activity. Bhaskar thus argues that in the examination of the relationship between agency and structure, the focus should be on 'relations' and the kind of relations that should be examined are those between 'positions and practices' and not between human agents or actors and abstract structures (Bhaskar 1998, 41). Viewed in this way it allows the researcher to examine structure and agency as separate entities, focusing on specific properties of structure in the form of the positions occupied by individuals, and agency in the form of the practices that individuals carry out.

Positions as a mediating system can be seen as place, function, rules, tasks, duties and rights in a given system (Bhaskar 1998, 41). That is, they are the positions occupied by individuals, each position having certain regulations for any individual occupying it at any point in time. Such rules are inherent to that position. Such positions can be social and political (for instance race, class, gender, beliefs, language), and administrative in the form of 'university positions (lecturer, HOD, dean). For example, the term black single mother or vice chancellor at once confers on the individual occupying that position certain tasks or rules that that individual must enact. It must be noted however that while these positions impose rules/duties/tasks as limitations, they are also enabling as they offer the individual a range of opportunities and possibilities for action. From this we can see that the actors or individuals here are not creators of the present structures or even have an input in the way in which these resources are distributed and it is this pre-structuring into positions and interests that shapes the pressure for transformation or reproduction (Archer 1995, 152). Bhaskar (1998, 36) argues that while structures impose limits on action they do not determine it (see also Archer 1995, 90). Positions then, while conferring sets of rules, tasks and duties on individuals occupying such positions, are both limiting and enabling in that they simultaneously confer certain privileges on the occupant (Archer 1995, 90). Viewed this way, structures can be examined separately from agents which allows the analysis to focus on certain questions that have to do with structural conditions (Bhaskar 1998, 41).

Also, practices as mediating systems between structure and agents are those 'activities' engaged in by individuals occupying 'positions'; they are the actions undertaken by individuals by virtue of the fact that they occupy such positions (Bhaskar 1998, 41). Since structures are only operative during

action, those positions become revealed when activity by a human agent takes place (Bhaskar 1998). So, for example the position single black mother or vice-chancellor is revealed when these rules or tasks that have been conferred by the position occupied are acted upon. Therefore, individuals are a necessary condition for the operation of the position-practice system as it is they who occupy and practice those positions (Bhaskar 1998, 41). Because structures do not determine actions, it is important to examine the practices or activities of individual agents simultaneously with the rules/tasks of their positions. This Bhaskar argues allows for a balanced examination of both structural conditions and the different allocation of productive resources and groups to roles and functions which enables one to 'situate the possibility of different and antagonistic conflicts within the society and of interest-motivated transformation in social structure' (Bhaskar 1998, 41). That is the separation of the two -- structure/agency -- into positions that individuals occupy enables the researcher to analyse the different structures within the society and which, among conflicting interests, engender transformation. This way it is possible to see how transformation occurs and to recognize the interplay between agency (human actions) and structures in such a process of transformation. Reproduction is thus seen as rooted in vested interests from groups who want to maintain structures that are enabling or provide favourable conditions for them — and transformation rooted in conflicts of interests between actors or groups occupying different positions with specific interests to defend (Archer 1995, 152).

In addition, Callinicos argues that in order to theorise agency adequately, the casual powers of individuals must be considered as individual have beliefs and desires which can be given as reasons for acting — and the structural capacities that determine the powers that agents have in relation to their positions must be taken into account (Callinicos 2004, 274). These positions offer the individual a diverse range of possibilities from which the agent can choose what course of action can be taken. This breaks with the idea of structures as solely limiting and leads us to view them as also enabling. Given this, structures then determine the access people have to resources and not the resources they have (Callinicos 2004, 275). Viewed this way the relationship between agency and structure becomes one in which structures determine the powers which the actor draws on, when acting in the light of their beliefs (Callinicos 2004, 276).

Furthermore, Giddens defines social positions as a social identity that carries with it a certain range of prerogatives and obligations that an actor who is accorded that identity (or is incumbent in that position) may carry out and these prerogatives and obligations constitute role prescription associated

with that position (Giddens 1979, 117; 1984, 83). He argues that social systems are constituted of reproduced practices and it is these practices that are the point of connection between human agents and structures (Giddens 1979, 117). Since social systems and not structures are located in time and space, we can see the social system as a structured field where actors occupy different positions (Giddens 1979, 117). That is structures themselves do not have roles and positions but since structures are located in the social system, such structures must then be conceived of as fields with different positions occupied by different individuals. That position comes with an identity (race, gender, age and occupation) which has obligations for the individual with such an identity and the enactment (the practice) of such obligations reproduces the identity. The positions defined here are not just sectors in which actors act but also bodily movements and gestures and individuals can be placed in a range of differing positions in the social system which intersect (Giddens 1984, 84, 85). Therefore, the society is made up of social practices which are enacted by actors in various positions across time. To understand the relationship between the modes of positioning and the duality of structures, one must understand the intersection of these positions with institutionalised practices (Giddens 1984, 85). That is, to examine the link between the way individuals are positioned and the duality of structures, one must examine the way individuals placed in different positions across time interact in relation to social practices.

Fields

Several studies on agency have acknowledged that conflicts do occur in social settings during relations or interactions — the argument is that these conflicts arise in the context of individuals with different interests, views, ideas and ideologies competing for resources, access to power and defending their interests (see Archer 1995; Giddens 1979; Swartz 1997; Cohen 1989; Tucker 1998). Archer (1995) for instance argues that the process of transformation or reproduction — morphogenesis and morphostasis respectively — arises out of the concessions, compromises and conflicts that take place during social interaction. Bourdieu uses the concept of the field to highlight the struggles and conflicts that occur in the course of social interaction. He argues that r social interaction occurs in 'arenas of conflicts' (Swartz 1997, 9; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Giddens (1979) also alludes to conflicts that may occur in social systems in the struggle over resources. The consensus is that the constraints and enablements that individuals within these social relations experience provides the conditions for struggles and conflicts. The implication of this for agency is that in any given social system, the potential for conflict is always implicated in action. Bourdieu's concept of fields provides a way of examining the social relations that exist within social fields. As

Mahar et al. (1990, 8) note, the notion of fields denotes 'a system of objective relations between symbolic points, works of art, artistic manifests, political dialectics and so on'. The university can be described as a field of social relations — 'a network or a configuration of objective relations between positions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 97; Anheier et.al. 1995, 860) and 'these positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) — whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions, domination, subordination, homology, etc.' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 97; see also Anheier et.al. 1995, 860). Fields can be seen as a place where dominant and subordinate groups struggle for control over resources and each field is related to one or more type of capital (Dumais 2002, 46; see also Archer 1995, 91). They can also be seen as positions occupied by individuals that provide the condition for action (Archer 1995; Bhaskar 1998). Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, 99) further argue that these rules governing fields are specific to different fields, places or societies and are capable of being put into practice in different societies. In the South African context, these fields or positions are very specific and diverse and are influenced by the history and legacies of apartheid which privileged one race, class and gender over the other. The implication of which is the creation of tense social situations and relations that often lead to conflicts. As has been argued structures provide the conditions for actions, hence, these conflicts are often between more privileged groups and less privileged groups (see Archer 1995; Bhaskar 1998, 33).

Roles

Roles as defined by Archer are somewhat similar to Bhaskar's position system where roles have tasks, duties and so forth associated with them. Here Archer argues, in line with Bhaskar, that individuals are significant to roles (structures) -- for a role to make sense or be understood, it must be occupied by individuals (Archer 1995, 186). Furthermore, these roles are connected to other roles where for example, the doctor's role makes sense because of the patient, likewise the teacher-student or landlord-tenant etc. (Archer 1995, 186). The distinction between structure and agents becomes the distinction between roles and their occupants, where the role itself with its 'do's and don'ts' adds enabling and constraining elements and the personal qualities which the actor brings to the role are examined separately (Archer 1995, 187). It is important to note that these roles have obligations, rules and interests attached to them which affect the individual occupying them in ways that both enable and constrain them (Archer 1995, 187).

Archer (1995, 188) also argues that the process of structural change also changes the actor through learning, reflection, weighed consciousness and self-monitoring. She argues that the acknowledgement of the emergent properties of structures and agents and examining their interplay enables the researcher to explain how the prior distribution of individuals into roles means that some actors are placed in roles or positions that allow them to be more influential agents than others (Archer 1995, 191). Giddens however rejects the notion of the society being constituted of roles and it being these roles that provide the link between individuals and structures, arguing rather for the concept of positions (1979, 117; 1984, 84).

Interests

Interests here is seen to be closely related to structures. Individuals are endowed with interests depending on their position in relation to their context. Since structures determine the context and where individuals are placed, each class or position then has interests attached to it, so that when an individual occupies that position, the individual inherits both the rules or roles or practices associated with that position and the interests associated with that position in that particular social context. There have been three major definitions of interests. The first and the second are quite similar, while one defines interests in terms of wants -- that is, if one carries out a specific action because it is in one's interests, it can be said that such action was enacted because the actor wanted it. The other introduces justifiable claim in place of wants (Giddens 1979, 188). Giddens however argues that these two are inadequate as it does not apply to all circumstances and the possibility still remains of actors not acting in their own interests (Giddens 1979, 188 see also Callinicos 2004, 140). The third argument introduces the element of pleasure to say that an action is in the actor's interests if it is more pleasurable than other possible course of actions. Giddens criticises this idea too for its failure to acknowledge 'pain' -- that is the possibility that an actor may also take actions that cause her pain (Giddens 1979, 188).

Archer's conception of interests sees structures as shaping the interests of the individual as they are differentially placed in the society. She argues that structures shape the environment in which actors find themselves and this shaping involves the prior distribution of resources, and results in individuals then being placed in different positions (Archer 1995, 196-197). The resultant effect of this is to endow different individuals with different interests as a component of the position or context where

he or she is placed. Archer argues that these 'vested interests' are embedded in socially structured positions and are a means by which structural properties exert influences on subsequent action (Archer 1995, 203). Archer further argues that interests are closely linked to opportunity costs as limiting and enabling structures which differentially place people, this means that an individual must weigh each course of action before choosing (Archer 1995, 205). This 'opportunity costs' are associated with different actions in a given context (Archer 1995, 205). These interests divide actors into two, one seeking to change structures and the other seeking to maintain them (Archer 1995). She argues that those that experience the negative sides try to transform and those experiencing the positive sides struggle to reproduce them knowingly or unknowingly (Archer 1995, 203).

For Giddens and Callinicos, interests are related to want, the approached differs with the inclusion of the concept of facilitation. While interests are closely related to wants, to say that an actor has interests in a given course of action is to say that, that course of action facilitates the possibility of the actor achieving his or her wants (Giddens 1979, 189; Callinicos 2004). Given this, interests cannot be reduced to wants as it must include the actor's knowledge on how to achieve such wants (Giddens 1979, 189). Thus, interests are not just wants but also the knowledge of how they can be realised, interest then include wants and means of realisation. Giddens (1979, 189) aregue, interests presume wants but the concept of interests concerns not wants as such but the 'possible modes of their realisation' in given sets of circumstances and these can be determined objectively. Here they are seen as equal concepts where interests imply 'potential course of action in contingent social and material circumstances' (Giddens 1979, 189). Interests then is the ability of an individual or group to have knowledge on the modes of realisation of their wants. Here structures (rules and resources) are then mobilised or utilised by individuals or groups to achieve their interests. Wants are just what people want at a given time while interests are context dependent, that is affected by the structures, groups and affiliations an actor has (Giddens 1979).

An understanding of interests then allows the researcher to connect structures to agency without infusing or reducing one to the other (Callinicos 2004, 140). Interests and wants can be conceptualised in two ways, first interests do not just suppose wants but also includes how those wants are realised, and secondly, these modes or means of realisation depends on the agent's structural capacities (Callinicos 2004, 140). Interests then depend on the position in which an individual is placed and the powers given to that individual by virtue of that position, it is related intrinsically to power and position. Interests can be determined by rationally accessing the powers an actor has by virtue of her

position which she can utilize to realise such want (Callinicos 2004, 147). This introduces the notion of conflict as the fact the people are placed in different position (which endows interests) and will share their interests with others in similar position, means that there will be clash of interests (Callinicos 2004, 147).

Rules and Resources

Here they are taken to mean the component of structures, Giddens (1979) argues that the structural system of a society consists of rules and resources which actors draw upon when taking actions. To be able to draw on these rules, the actor needs a comprehensive knowledge of the rules and resources and how to utilize them in different situations during interaction. Hence to study the way in which a society is structured is to study the way in which that system is produced and reproduced in interaction, through the application of rules and resources in the context of unintended consequences (Giddens 1979, 66; 1982, 10). These rules Giddens argues have both constitutive and regulative aspects to them (1979, 66), thus rules involves knowledge that they exist and can influence action and knowledge of how to employ them in social interaction. Giddens sees rules not as a set of regulations guiding the way things are done as in 'rules of the game' but they 'are the medium of production and reproduction of practice' (1979, 67). That is, they form means by which actors produce and reproduce structures, they are not prescriptions or a list of do's and don'ts. The process by which a rule influences an action is not straightforward, it is a messy process as there cannot be an explanation of how one rule affects a specific action (Giddens 1979, 65). Rather when an action takes place, a set of 'overlapping' and connect set of rules are put into play (Giddens 1979, 65).

Giddens links resources and power (seen as a capability) together, he conceptualises resources as the base for power an actor draws upon during interaction (1979, 69). If power is the capability of an actor to do what s/he wants at the expense of others, then resources are those forms of 'power' which an individual utilizes to achieve these interests. The concept of power depends on the utilization of resources, as they are the means in which an actor's objective is realised despite opposition and constraints (Giddens 1979, 92). Within the reach of an actor, resources become a powerful means by which an actor transforms or reproduces structures. Thus, Giddens write, 'resources are the media whereby transformative capacity is employed as power in the routine course of social interaction', power then only operates in the utilization of resources, it is a relational concept (1979, 92).

Power

Power is defined not as the form of resistance or a state of affairs but a form of capability and is closely tied to human agency (Giddens 1979, 68, 94; Callinicos 2004, 37). The ability of an individual to achieve his or her wants and get others to agree with his or her interests is power. Power is a relational concept, however this power to achieve a desired goal is revealed when an actor utilises resources in a transformative capacity as generated by structures of domination (Giddens 1979, 92). Given this, it can be said that power operates through transformation and domination, in the sense that it operates through the individual and structures in a social system. Callinicos (2004, 7) writes, 'action consist in the exercise of power and he powers agents have depend on and are determined in part by social structures'. This limiting and enabling nature of structures can only be understood once the 'conceptual connection between power and action is grasped, as action involves the exercise of transformative capacity' Callinicos notes (2004, 94). Here power is not abstract and outside human action but reveals itself in the capacity of an individual to act, it is only revealed in human action, thus structure is seen as a medium for human action rather than a condition for it (Callinicos 2005, 95; see also New 1994, 188).

Giddens (1984, 14; 1979, 91) argues that for the actor to be able to act otherwise means s/he is able to act or not to act upon a given situation, which results in affecting the process or situation in specific directions of transformation or reproduction. That the actor acting otherwise yields a result of transformation or reproduction does not mean that the outcome is the intended consequence of the actor's interests as these results or outcomes may be an unintended consequence of such acting otherwise (Giddens 1979; 1984). To be an agent then is to be able to deploy a range of causal powers including that of influencing the causal powers deployed by others (Giddens 1979, 88). Given this, although agents operate within structurally influenced limits, they have a certain relative autonomy and always have the option of acting differently or choosing a different course of action (Giddens 1979, 91). Thus, the power of an agent lies in his or her ability to bring about changes to existing structures of domination or to in his or her interests maintain such structures despite others efforts to transform it. Hence, the concept of action is tied to power and the fact that the actor experiences structural constraints does not mean that the actor is striped of the power to act (Giddens 1979, 88; 1984, 15). While an individual experiences constraint structurally, the fact that these constraints do not determine actions but influence it, means that the actor/individual is presented with a range of possible actions and has the power to choose what action he or she wants — and in the event of that there still remains a possibility that the actor may have acted otherwise. Power then entails a

transformative capacity as the actor has the power to choose what course of action is taken (Giddens 1984, 15). Power is not a means by which an actor's interests is achieved, it is not itself a resource in which actors can draw on, rather Giddens (1979, 91; 1984, 16) argues that resources are a means by which power is exercised. Since power has been described as one that entails a transformative capacity, it presumes a certain form of autonomy and dependence between individuals and groups/collectives in a social system (Giddens 1979). That is, the most powerful or autonomous individual in a relationship to some extent relies/depend on the least powerful for their autonomy and even the most oppressed or dominated has some form of autonomy. Power is then not a form of resource but can be seen as implicated in structures and action, thus must be treated in the context of the duality of structure as power operates through the application of transformative capacity, generated by structures of domination (Giddens 1979, 92). Giddens (1979, 92) further argues that they fact that the individual could have acted otherwise is significant to the theory of power as it is the transformative capacity of an actor ability to get others to conform to his or her wants. Power is then inherently linked to human agency as it involves the ability of the actor to achieve a desired goal where such achievement it dependent on the agency of others. In social interaction, power is then the facilities (not resource) an actor brings to and mobilizes which influence the course of outcome of a situation (Giddens 1979, 93). Seen this way, power no longer becomes one sided as in the instance of resistance, state of affairs or the realisation of interests but as a two-way relations between actors of both autonomy and dependence. Such a conception of power and structure in relation to action resolves the problem of structures as a determinant of agency as such structure is no longer limiting but also enabling and therefore present in human action (Callinicos 2004).

Strategy and Strategic selectivity

Strategy is intentional action focused on a specific context. Hay defines strategy as 'the intentional conduct oriented towards the environment in which it occurs' and for that action to yield an intended outcome, 'it must be informed by a strategic assessment of the relevant context in which strategy occurs and upon which it subsequently impinges' (Hay 2002, 129). To act strategically then is to take into consideration the consequence of all course of action together with the possible constraints and enablement imposed by the context when making a decision (Hay 2002, 132). For example, the decision to reject certain dominant discourses in a specific structure involves the individual having knowledge of various modes of taking action and the results of the different course of actions and the factors that may be limiting as well as what can be utilised in their favour before such action is taken. This argument seems to relate to Archer's opportunity costs where the individual chooses the best

possible means of achieving an interest with the full knowledge of its consequence (see Archer 1995). Given this the argument is that all action must contain some form of strategic moment and once such strategy has been formulated and acted on, the outcome may be a partial unintended transformation and strategic learning (Hay 2002, 133). Reproduction or transformation here is then seen as the outcome of individual strategic choices in relation to strategic contexts.

3.4 Conclusion

A common thread in the argument of various theorists is the fact that individuals and structures have properties that are distinct to them and it is this that forms the means through which the relationship between agency and structures can be conceptualised. I have discussed the different approaches to this question from which I drew seven concepts that can form a threshold between agents and structures. These concepts provide a means through which we can examine how structures impact on action which is in turn impacted by structures to enable social change or transformation. The positions or approaches discussed above can be divided into four broad approaches -- conflationist (those who argue for the explanation of agency and structure in terms of one another); analytical dualism (these scholars argue for the separation of agency and structure as they possess emergent properties which make them analytically and factually distinguishable. This approach allows for the examination of their interplay); duality (these scholars argue that structures and agents should be seen as constitutive of each other, described as two sides of a coin as agents utilize rules and resources or power when taking an action). In a bid to transcend duality and dualism the fourth approach introduces strategies and strategic selection, arguing that action is dependent on strategy in relation to a specific context.

These various conceptions of agency and structure recognise the impact social context has on the capacity for human action and the outcome of such action, and that actions have both intended and unintended consequences. Thus, as individuals we do not choose the kind of society, class, race, gender and sexuality we are born into and these social positions determine to an extent our capacity for agency as they endow us with opportunities and limitations within that social setting. For example, the term 'single black working class mother', suggests an individual with certain possibilities and restrictions in contemporary South African society given the way in which the society is structured according to gendered, classed and raced inequalities. In this sense the ability for agency to engender transformation or for an individual to act in such a way as to bring about change, is influenced by her social context, the structures within such contexts and her position within that context. These give access to different kinds and amounts of resources and offers different possibilities for transformation.

Agency then provides a means through which structures are transformed into process and humans enter into history (Anderson 1980, 17). The concepts discussed here provide a threshold —what Bhaskar calls a system of mediating for the relationship between agency and structure for the purpose of analysis and the generation of insight and understanding into concrete social processes and concrete human experiences of those processes.

4 Chapter
Methodology: Hermeneutic Phenomenology

4.1 Introduction

> Hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the logos of the other, the whole, the communal or the social (Van Manen 1997, 7).

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures employed in answering the question *'How do Individual Academic Staff Members at Rhodes University Experience Having Agency to Effect Transformation?'* The study draws on a phenomenological perspective which is grounded in experience (Crotty 1998, 78: Richardson 1999, 64; Grey 2004; Patton 2002; Yanow 2007; Neuman 2006; 2011; Marvasti 2004; Creswell 2003; Holstien and Gubrim 2005; Moustakas 1994). Specifically, it outlines a hermeneutic phenomenological or interpretive phenomenological perspective that conceptualises human experiences as integrally linked to context, comprising social and structural relations (Koch 1995; Nelms 2015; Dowling 2007; Crotty 1998; Flood 2010; Hamill and Sinclair 2010; Lopez and Willis 2004; Racher and Robinson 2003, 472). A qualitative study was designed in which the approach to the analysis of the data generated was both inductive and deductive, given the hermeneutic phenomenological underpinnings of the study, which acknowledges the role of pre-understanding or contexts in the way we interpret human experiences. The aim of the study was to give individuals who have taken action aimed at transformation of the existing structures, relations and practices of the university context in which they find themselves, the opportunity to tell their story and talk about their experiences of what had enabled and/or constrained their ability/willingness/capacity to take action in this way. Participants' tellings provide access to 'comprehend the structure of their lived experiences in a way that enabled me to grasp the nature and significance of their having agency to effect transformation' (Landgren 2015, 160; see also Van Manen 1997).

It is useful at the outset to note that my chosen methodology was not selected because a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was of interest to me; it was chosen because understanding the phenomenon of agency, enablements and limitation within a specific structure — required a methodology that focused on both the individual and the context in which action arises. After all, the

world, and its structural properties, are given to us and at the same time constituted by us (Van Manen 1997, XI). Therefore, gaining an insight into this world of structures which are already there and actively created by us — into how we actively create such worlds and structures and how we change them, as well as being constituted in some ways by them, requires a hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation. The focus of phenomenology is thus on how one comes to understand lived experiences and hermeneutics — how one interprets texts of life (Van Manen 1997, 4).

After writing my theoretical chapter, I began to realise that understanding the phenomenon of agency required more than a content, narrative or thematic analysis of the stories or texts of the individuals whom I had interviewed. I reasoned that for me to understand this complex relationship between structure and agents/action and how reproduction, or importantly change, happens, I needed a more nuanced approach, one which focuses both on experiences and how those experiences are constructed within specific contexts. We cannot experience a phenomenon outside a particular language, culture, context and shared system of understanding. Hence such texts or stories that are generated from participants in a qualitative study need to be both understood as providing a degree of access into individuals' lifeworlds and at the same time interpreted in relation to specific languages, cultures and contexts. As Van Manen (1997, 7) states, 'hermeneutic phenomenology is a philosophy of the personal, the individual, which we pursue against the background of an understanding of the evasive character of the *logos* of *other*, the *whole*, the *communal* or the *social*'. In other words, hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on understanding individual experience in relation to their social and cultural backdrop. The idea is to view and treat agency as requiring clarification of its lived meaning (see Van Manen 1997, 24).

Hermeneutic phenomenology assumes that individuals 'interpret or attach meanings to their experiences' which meaning then becomes part of the structure of the experience (Nelms 2015, 5; Racher and Robinson 2002, 472). The assumptions of hermeneutic phenomenology thus allow for a conceptualisation of the relationship between structures and agents, the researcher and participants and finally the agent and the specificities of a (historical, social, cultural, economic, interactional) context. This conception of experience as embedded in structure and context is opposed to the traditional Husserlian descriptive approach to phenomenology which insists that we must lay aside our previous understanding of a phenomenon and revisit our immediate experience of it so that new meanings can emerge (Crotty 1998, 78; Grey 2004, 21; Patton 2002; Hamill and Sinclair 2010, 16; Dowling 2007, 132; Moustakas 2004). A central requirement of the Husserlian philosophical stance

is the need to bracket assumptions, prior knowledge and pre-conceived categories to allow the data to speak for itself, as this may result in creating new understandings of the phenomena under investigation (Crotty 1998; 80; Koch 1995, 829; Grey 2004; Dowling 2007, 136; Lopez and Willis 2004, 727; Gelling 2010; Lopez and Willis 2004). The task of the researcher is then to ensure that her preconceptions, values, beliefs, attitudes and prior knowledges do not affect the data analysis process so that new meanings and insights can be gained from the data. However, this does not mean that such preconceptions and assumptions are completely removed from the research process. I did not find this approach/method suitable because it does not allow theoretical insights and knowledge about the context to affect the research process and specifically the way the data is read or analysed. The focus rather is on the human experience of the life-world and the unit of analysis is individuals (Grey 2004, 21; Creswell 2003, 9; Holstien and Gubruim 2005, 485; Todres and Wheeler 2001, 3; Lopez and Willis 2004). The hermeneutic phenomenological approach, in contrast, sees the incorporation of theoretical frameworks or perspectives as important to the research process and to being able to gain insight into the meaning of the data generated (see Flood 2010, 13).

In addition, my understanding of the agency/structure divide rested on the assumption that there is a relationship between the two and they cannot be studied outside of each other as noted previously. Hence my need to view experience as embedded within social contexts and structures. In 'The Evidence of Experience', Joan Scott argues that experiences are constituted within 'discourse and discursive practices' — what I term structural relations (Scott 1991, 777). Therefore, examining experiences outside their structural makeup runs the risk of locating agency as dependent on, or explicable in terms of, individual characteristics alone (Scott 1991, 777) — an assumption I intentionally avoided. This however does not mean a rejection of individual and personal characteristics, but rather an acknowledgment that they are a product of social conditioning. Individual experiences emerge, occur and are interpreted and understood within specific social contexts. This thus eliminates the binary of individual characteristics and socially inscribed characteristics as they are treated as intertwined, and cannot be examined outside of each other. My methodological approach thus allowed for an examination of experience as individual characteristics (by this I mean agential capabilities — attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, values that guide action) and at the same time an examination of the structures and discourses that shaped those experiences. Attention to experience and the structures that constitute it was made possible via a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to the interpretation of the data.

The hermeneutic phenomenological or interpretive phenomenological approach is linked to the work of Heidegger (1962) who highlights the relationship between experience and context when he argues that 'humans are embedded in their world to such an extent that subjective experiences are inextricably linked with social, cultural and political context' (Leonard 1999 in Flood 2010, 9; Koch 1995, 831; Dowling 2007, 133; Hamill and Sinclair 2010, 17; Lopez and Willis 2004, 729). While Heidegger and Husserl do agree with focusing on human experience as lived, Heidegger, a student of Husserl, argued for an understanding of experience from a methodological perspective of interpretation rather than description (Dowling 2007, 133; Lindseth and Norberg 2004; Koch 1995; Mackey 2005; Kafle 2011; Laverty 2003). He believed that humans interpreted their experiences and that understanding occurs in ways that are specific to context (Koch 1995, 83; Nlems 2015, 3). In *Being and Time (1962),* Heidegger argues for an understanding of background or prior knowledge as integral to the study of experience and his concept of pre-understanding highlights the relationship between experience and social contexts, structures and cultures (Koch 1995, 831). Koch (1995, 831) notes that this concept 'described the meaning and organisation of culture (including language and practice) which are already in the world…stories are then already within our common background of understanding'. What is significant here is that this philosophical stance allows for an understanding of experience as embedded within context (both cultural and structural). For Heidegger, hermeneutic phenomenology is a 'circular movement' that involves the researcher understanding the structural nature of experience which enables our understanding of that experience (Crotty 1998, 97-98). This argument has enormous implications for my research in that structures are then conceptualised as providing for an understanding of my participants' experiences. Thus, rather than hold one over the other i.e. structure over agency or agency over structures, it enables an understanding of structures as integral to the analysis or interpretation of agency or action. The task of the researcher then is to 'render explicit and thematic what was at first implicit and un-thematised' (Crotty 1998, 97). To make such phenomena explicit, the researcher then must understand the structures that make action possible (Crotty 1998, 98).

Hermeneutic phenomenology then, allows for my focus on the experience of the individual viewed to have taken action to enable transformation of both structural processes/relations and cultural practices in the university. Existing research highlights the relationship between structure and agency and the degree of limitation placed on the agent by structural and cultural conditions especially regarding change or enabling transformation (see Archer 1995; Bhaskar 1998; Callinicos 2004; Giddens 1979; 1984). My understanding of hermeneutic phenomenology allows me to examine and

understand both structures and cultures and specifically their influence on human action and the way in which action influences structure.

The aim of phenomenology is to analyse stories about lived experiences to reveal the essence of a phenomenon (Landgren 2015). While phenomenology was utilised as a perspective aimed at enabling an understanding of the essence of agency, I needed to understand agency in the historical context of apartheid and colonialism and the imperative to transform relations and practices inherited from the past in South Africa. Hermeneutics, and in particular the adoption of the interpretive approach, afforded me access to making sense of my participants' experiences embedded within specific contexts. Interpretation enables the researcher to understand individual experiences in the context in which those experiences take place. Landgren (2015, 159) writes, to 'interpret information is to render it understandable and to make complex and layered impressions comprehendible'. This type of interpretation draws on personal expectations, cultures, and previous experiences, 'it is a disclosure of what is already there' (Landgren 2015, 159). Thus, the blending of the two, phenomenology and hermeneutics, enabled me to explore the essence of agency to effect transformation via the experiences of individuals embedded in a post-colonial, post-apartheid context. I chose the hermeneutic phenomenological approach described by van Manen (1997, 18), which aims to 'construct a full interpretive description of some aspects of the life world, and yet to remain aware that lived life is always more complex than any explication of meaning can reveal'.

As noted previously, the literature on transformation in South African higher education notes the slow pace at which transformation is happening at universities. More specifically, this literature points to the lack of structural and cultural transformation within these institutions (DoE 2008; Govinder, Zondo and Makogba 2013; Akooje and Nkomo 2007). In the context of studies on the agency-structure divide, the need for a structural and cultural change in universities in South Africa and the limits placed on action by structures, I was interested in how individual agents were able to use their agency to ensure transformation amid limiting and rigid structures and cultures which have proved resilient and resistant to change. If individuals play a role in transforming structures and cultures that are deeply infused with legacies of apartheid which privileged masculinity and whiteness, how are they able to make this transformation happen? What conditions enabled or constrained them and what are the implications for being able to effect institutional change in South Africa?

In particular, I was interested in understanding the experiences that these agents of change have had with attempting to effect change. Specifically, I wished to explore:

1. What has enabled/limited their agency to effect actions that might be described as 'transformative' of current inequities and structural and cultural power imbalances in the university?
2. How do the identified individuals deploy their capacity to act and how do social structures determine/enable/limit the powers that these individuals draw on when acting in light of their beliefs and desires to bring about transformation?
3. What role do the cultures and structures that dominate the institutional setting in which these agents are embedded play, in the experience of these key actors, in limiting or enabling their agency to effect change?
4. In what ways have demographic change been accompanied by deeper structural change in cultures, practices and ways of being and how have the identified key actors seen their own role in effecting or failing to effect these deeper changes?

4.2 Hermeneutic/Interpretive Phenomenology: Structures, Agents and Social Transformation

> The view that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (Crotty 1998, 42).

Inherent in my research question and the focus of the study are four main assumptions:

1. There is a link between individuals and their social context.
2. While actions may be autonomous they do not operate outside structures.
3. While structures are the result of human interaction, they acquire a certain power such that they are able to act as constraints and enablements for individuals in that context.
4. These actions cannot be understood outside structures and structural relations and structures cannot be understood outside human interaction.

These assumptions point to a hermeneutic phenomenology that views human experience as situated (Flood 2010; Crotty 1998). Crotty's statement encapsulates my argument for the recognition of a relationship between structure and agents, where experience is a result of human social interaction and can be understood and interpreted partly in terms of the structures and context within which it arises. The underlying assumption here is that meaning is constructed as people engage or interact with their social contexts. Hence the task of the researcher is to examine experience in order to understand or perceive how a phenomenon is given meaning in context (Flood 2010, 8; Nelms 2015). The implication of the outlined assumptions is that I do not take the experiences of my participants as given and objective, but recognise that they will always be affected by social contexts and the structures within those contexts. In the same vein, I do not take structures as given or outside of the individual. An understanding of the context is then important to understanding the meaning of lived experience. Neuman (2006, 92) notes that it is only possible to assign appropriate meaning to an action or a statement if the social context in which it occurs is considered (see also Yanow 2007, 11; Neuman 2011, 71). That is, action can only be understood in the context of a shared understanding: what may be meaningful in a particular context may hold a different meaning in another context (Neuman 2006; Neuman 2011; Marvasti 2004, 5). Therefore, the participants' experiences cannot be understood outside of the context in which they occur (Neuman 2011, 74; Yanow 2007, 11). The social setting or structures are seen as shaping the choices of the individual (Neuman 2006, 90). The implication of this is that our social reality is not fixed; what may mean something in one context may mean another in a different context. As Yanow (2007, 13) aptly states 'the social world we inhabit and experience is potentially a world of multiple realities and multiple interpretations (see also Lopez and Willis 2004, 730).

In line with the theory of agency and structure outlined in the theoretical chapter of the present thesis, the hermeneutic phenomenologist then assumes that individual freedom/agency is not absolute; it is always affected by the conditions of the daily lives of actors (see Flood 2010, 9; Lopez and Willis 2004, 729). While individuals have the ability to make their own choices, the social context in which the individual lives or the structural relations in which that individual is implicated, influences such choices. Hence, rather than a description of experience, the focus of the researcher is on describing meaning for participants and how such meaning or such interpretations influence the choices they then go on to make — and what is examined is participants' narratives in relation to their context (Flood 2010, 9; Lopez and Willis 2004, 729). This philosophical assumption then resolves the problem of interpretation where the researcher focuses solely on individual experience. It allows for

the conceptualisation of individual experiences of agency in relation to the context or structures in which they find themselves.

Yanow (2007, 12) argues, 'phenomenology requires accessing what is meaningful to social, political, cultural and other groups and to individuals within them as well as understanding how meaning is developed, expressed and communicated'. In social situations phenomenology, then, is used to address individuals in social encounters with one another and how in such social situations people manage to understand each other without making explicit the rules of interaction (Yanow 2007, 13). What this means is that phenomenology allows for the examination of individual interaction in a social setting, which includes an examination of structural relations and the rules that guide interaction. She further argues that over time 'rules' are submerged into unspoken practices, becoming tacit knowledge, creating a sense of 'how we do things here' (Yanow 2007, 13). What she is speaking of here is how human interaction over time leads to the formation of rules, practices and ways of doing things (a kind of structural relation) that affects both individuals in that setting and new individuals entering the setting. This highlights the hermeneutic phenomenological conception of the relationship between structure and agents where structures are a result of past relationships and interactions. These structures are formed through interactive processes where members come to use the same modes of understanding to interpret their situations and the choices that are available to them (Yanow 2007, 14).

Far from viewing actors as agent-less, hermeneutic/interpretive phenomenology views actors as having agency to make conscious choices (Neuman 2006, 90), hence it recognises the possibility of change. Methodologically this implies that the researcher undertakes a careful description and interpretation of how people experience a particular phenomenon and how these experiences are produced (Patton 2002). Therefore, while we have agency to make our choices, our choices are always affected by the structures and context in which we find ourselves. Importantly, it recognises that these structures or social settings are created by people, as King (1999) puts it, are as a result of the 'interactions of now dead individuals'. This points to a commitment to the view that reality is a composition of a system of interactions and shared meanings which affects both the individual's actions and their understanding of their experiences/the meaning attached to those experiences. Stone (1998) argues against the idea of taking the narratives of experience as truths, facts and evidence, as they are always embedded in/affected by discourse. Instead, the researcher, when analysing narratives, understands them as partial and incomplete representations (Stone 1998). In this study

narratives/experience therefore became a means by which I could engage with 'tensions in experience': the interplay of different discourses, whether dominant or marginalised, and the strategies through which they are produced and reproduced (Stone 1998). As Stone argues, reading stories of experience in this way enables the researcher to 'discern contradictions in her experience' and this involves a recognition of the researcher's input in the process of interpretation of a narrative (Stone 1998).

4.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted incorporating four university departments that had been identified by the Transformation Director of the University as having made progress towards transformation — on a range of measures whether in teaching and learning, community engagement, student and staff demographics, or research. The pilot study I conducted in 2014 was based on a research request by the director of transformation, equity and institutional culture who was acting on the requests by the Head of Departments for an understanding of how to aid transformation within the various departments in the university. The research sought to understand what it means for a department to, or not to, make progress towards transformation. It asked, how would one measure progress towards transformation? What would be the criteria? The focus of the enquiry was on four departments which as noted above were identified to be making progress towards transformation. The identification was based on evidence that suggested positive progress within the departments for instance with respect to altering the demographic composition of staff and/or students. In-depth interviews were conducted with staff members in each of these departments with the goal of understanding what, in the view of the participants, had enabled transformation in their departments — to whatever extent such progress had been made. A total of 30 interviews were conducted with academic staff members in the four departments. Participants were asked a single guiding question: 'Given the legacy of apartheid and the imperative for universities to transforms their structures and practices, for example in relation to teaching, research and the way we relate to each other in the university, what in your view and personal experience, has either aided or constrained such efforts?' The interviews lasted for an average of one hour, and the interviews were then transcribed and analysed using NVivo software. I discuss the results, interpretation and concepts derived from the pilot study below.

The initial coding process yielded four main categories namely:

1. Understandings of transformation.
2. What participants saw as enabling from the perspective of efforts towards transformation.

3. What participants saw as constraining from the perspective of efforts towards transformation.
4. Participants' view of their own individual agency with respect to being able to make a difference in relation to transformation (Vincent and Idahosa 2014).

Subsequent analysis yielded eight concepts namely: resources, age, knowledge, experience, leadership, race, gender, personal/individual characteristics, network of support, institutional cultures and structures. These concepts highlight the participants' views on factors, processes and practices that enabled or limited their agency to effect transformation. The concepts also highlight some of the factors that were important to the progress of transformation in the various departments, I discuss them below.

Resources

We identified access to resources as one of the factors that enables or limits the ability to take action to effect transformation. Resources here is seen as those things that make for easy access to what is needed to take action. Participants' idea of resources varied depending on their interpretation of 'transformation'. Examples of resources mentioned by participants included: access to technology and facilities to enable them to help (especially underprepared) students. Time was highlighted by many participants as a limitation. Access to funding was mentioned as either enabling someone to act and accomplish his/her desired goals or preventing this from happening. Accelerated development programmes were cited as resources that enabled some participants to have agency to effect transformation, for instance making it possible for a Head of Department to achieve the goal of attracting and retaining Black staff. Finally, the power attached to one's status and position was highlighted as a resource that can be drawn on to influence change.

Age/Knowledge/Experience

Having knowledge about the way things work within the institution and access to programmes and support outside of a given academic department was cited by some participants as enabling them to act to bring about change. In some other cases, a combination of knowledge and experience was seen as enabling them to effect change in their various departments. But it was also noted that experience could work negatively, as a bulwark against change in instances where individuals who viewed themselves as having expertise in their field, thought any suggestion to change was unnecessary because they were already, in their perception, experts. In addition, some older academics viewed

change as something for the new generation of academics, rather than as something they saw themselves being able to make a contribution to. Some participants who wanted to be active in change felt the older staff members were more of a barrier to change or that the older staff members limited their ability to enable change.

Leadership

Leadership has been identified as one of the important factors that enables or limits change, where if the leadership desires change and creates an enabling environment, then it becomes easier for agents to take actions and if the leadership does not want change then the environment becomes more limiting and difficult from the point of view of taking actions for change. Participants identified leaders, whether at departmental, division, lab or institutional level as important to their ability to take action towards transformation. Participants who felt they were enabled to take action often spoke about the leadership in their workplace. This form of enabling leadership was characterised as allowing the agents free flow of ideas, where they were able to run with or do what they perceived was best. Participants that were in positions of leadership also acknowledged the power and influence that was attached to their positions. Also important was the view of leadership as limiting, where some participants felt limited when it came to the overall hierarchy of the university. Some felt they were there to implement rather than make or influence policy.

'Race' and gender as enabling or constraining

'Race' was seen as giving the individual a certain level of power and autonomy to make transformational changes or inhibiting the ability of the agent to take action towards transformation. In the South African context, race continues to have a deep meaning for, and effects on, the lives of individuals. While some participants denied the influence of their race on their ability to take action towards transformation, others noted the huge role it plays in their agency. Some of the Black participants noted how their race constituted an enabling factor in their attempt to bring about transformation, where they were seen as either role models or they became a resource for other Black academics and Black students. However, some noted that while they were able to have an impact on individual students, on an institutional level it became much more difficult to have agency. While for some it was difficult to have their voices heard, for others there was an assumption that transformation was their responsibility because they were Black. On the other hand, some White participants felt their whiteness made it difficult to understand 'issues of transformation', while others felt it made

them much more aware of such imperatives. Here whiteness was viewed as a form of limitation because of the skepticism surrounding a White person taking action towards transformation. In addition, some female participants felt their gender was a resource they could draw on as it allowed some insight into the challenges faced by marginalised groups and individuals and hence accentuated their awareness of the need for transformation.

Personal and individual characteristics

One of the categories identified that either enabled or constrained transformation in the eyes of the participants was their individual characteristics. Many individuals who were recognised as change agents by others believed that agency came about as a result of personal conviction and their strong sense of right and wrong which affected their attitude towards transformation and their desire to make a difference. Also, some participants noted a lack of interest in transformation as one of the limiting factors, where some participants saw transformation as being outside their control.

Networks of Support

Having a network of support was also identified as important to agents' ability to take action, where those who do not enjoy the luxury of being in a powerful and influential position are able to have support networks they can lean on. In contrast some participants who are not in powerful positions reported often finding themselves isolated and being unable to find ways of bringing their ideas to the fore or taking action. Having a network of support was mentioned as important as it allows for one's ideas to be taken up in a group which can strengthen the individual's transformation efforts.

Institutional Cultures

Institutional culture is described as the way things are done, the environment and the general feel of the university space. According to Tierney (1988, 3) 'an organisation's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it…it concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level'. Institutional culture was seen by several participants as a limitation to transformation (see also Higgins 2007; Kezar and Eckel 2002). Many participants viewed the existing culture of the institution as colonialist, individualistic and very traditional -- and thus allowing for little or no change. Some also described the culture as one that fails to welcome everyone. These participants felt that to be heard you must fit into the existing culture and that any difference is marginalised. Some participants felt the culture was very intimidating,

alienating and 'all talk and no action'. They viewed creating an environment that is 'stimulating and welcoming' as important to the transformation process in the university.

Institutional Structures and Processes

Institutional structures refer to the practices and processes that make up the management and governance of the university. Many participants felt the structures in the university, both physical and relational, made it difficult to take action. Participants' view of the structures ranged from the small size of the university which places a greater administrative burden on academics, to the bureaucracy they must go through when they want something done.

These findings provided a framework for the development of my doctoral research. The aim of the current study was to refine the research problem based on the findings of the pilot study. The pilot study revealed the relationship between an individual's understanding and interpretation of transformation and their attitude and commitment to transformation. I found that when an individual sought to make a difference this went hand-in-hand with particular interpretations of transformation and what in their view was desirable (Vincent and Idahosa 2014, 59). Thus, individuals who saw transformation as both desirable and their responsibility, showed a degree of commitment to engendering transformation — while those who believed that transformation was externally determined and did not believe that transformation was their responsibility or had anything to do with them showed less commitment to taking actions aimed at transformation. The pilot study concluded that there would be a need to deepen our understanding and conversation about 'what transformation is and how particular practices may harm some and advantage others in ways that are not always easy to discern but which require some careful introspection, genuine exposure to ways of seeing and being that are not our own and willingness to allow for the possibility that one's existing convictions might not be all entirely without fault' (Vincent and Idahosa 2014).

The present study sought to account for what enabled such understanding and seeing by those who showed a commitment to transforming. The implication of this was a shift in my research focus from departments and institutions to individuals. Also, a shift from focusing on all academic staff to those who have taken actions towards transformation. My current study thus sought to expand on the findings of the pilot study and deepen our understanding of the role played by individuals in the transformation process. At the same time, I aimed at examining the role factors like race, class, age,

position and status played in enabling or constraining agency in the current institutional and social context.

4.4 Participants and Data Collection

Because the present study was focused on identifying participants who could be described as agents of higher education 'transformation', it was, from the outset important to clarify the definition of 'transformation' that would be utilised in the study. While there has been a great emphasis in recent years on changing the demographic complexion of, especially, South Africa's historically white educational institutions, transformation cannot be reduced to demographics but involves also a change in the various practices, processes and cultures of an institution ranging from teaching and learning through to research and day-to-day, interpersonal social interactions as well as artefacts, the built environment and the materiality of the institution (CHE 2016, 24-25).

My sampling strategy was purposive/strategic and aimed at identifying individuals who self-identify or have been identified by others in their setting, as having made an effort to contribute to the transformation process in the university (see Mason 2002, 123-124; Seidman 2006, 53). In order to understand the relationship between structure, agency and change, I wanted to focus on individual academics who have taken specific actions that might be interpreted as 'transformative' in the sense that they interrupt existing business-as-usual ways of doing things in the university. In hermeneutic phenomenology, the aim of participant selection is to select participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied and are willing to talk about such experiences (Laverty 2003, 29). Because I wanted to focus on actions that might be regarded as significant, I was interested to identify actions oriented towards the core business or mission of the university: that is to say, related to teaching and learning, research, governance, management and/or community engagement. Through consultation with divisions such as the Community Engagement Office, the Society for Female Academics (SFA), the Directorate of Research and the Centre for Higher Education Research Teaching and Learning (CHERTL), participants were identified who are, in the eyes of others in their context, 'agents of change' — individuals who have acted in such a way as to effect noteworthy changes in the practices, processes and cultures of the university.

A total of 32 names were received from the different divisions and invitations were sent to these academics requesting their participation in the study. Participants needed to have been seen to have made or be making, a contribution to transforming the existing structures and cultures of some aspect

of the university through their teaching, research, governance, management and/or community engagement. Of the 32 requests distributed, 15 agreed to participate in in-depth interviews which was considered a satisfactory number given the aim of hermeneutic phenomenology of understanding experience with a view to constructing theories or models from the data using an inductive approach, which requires small in-depth samples or data sets (Grey 2004, 22). Seidman (2006, 7) notes that in-depth phenomenological interviews have the potential to reveal, through their detailed engagement with participants' experiences, the most complicated social abstractions based on the concrete experiences of people.

It is common, when employing in-depth open ended interviewing in qualitative research, to engage with, on average, five to 15 participants (Patton 2002; 104; Grey 2004, 22; Creswell 2003, 9). The aim of such interviews is to provide a means through which the lived experiences and the participant's perception of these experiences can be understood and interpreted (Seidman 2006, 9; Grey 2004, 214; Kvale 2007, 1). The strategic/purposive sampling method in line with phenomenological research does not focus on a large number of participants, neither does it focus on whether the number is representative of the group being studied statistically (see Mason 2002, 134; Patton 2002; 106; Seidman 2006, 53). The process of sampling rather involves an iterative process in which data is generated by the researcher until saturation is reached (Mason 2002, 134; Charmaz 2006, 96) — a point of diminishing return in qualitative research when data coding reveals that sufficient insights pertinent to the research question have been achieved in order to make a contribution to understanding.

In my interviews with my participants I sought to understand their experiences of having agency to effect change in the university. Given the nature of the research I worked from a guide[9] which I had produced on areas of experiences that needed to be covered in conversation with the participants (see Hamill and Sinclair 2010, 19). The interviews explored participants' experiences of agency and what enabled or constrained, in their view, their efforts at engaging in actions aimed at effecting transformation of some kind of existing structures, practices, norms or procedures within the domain in which they operate as academics. The interviews explored participants' experiences of their location in the institution, how, if at all, it affected their capacity for agency and the meaning it held for them. Hamill and Sinclair (2010, 19) note that during the interview process, it may be necessary to use prior contextual or theoretical knowledge of a concept to direct participants. My understanding of agency for instance played a role in how I conducted the interviews. For example, when I asked if

[9] See Appendix E

participants felt enabled or limited in their ability to effect actions they regarded as transformatory of existing structures, practices, values and norms, this was as a direct result of my conception of the relationship between agency and structure.

An audio recorder was used to record the interview sessions to allow me to concentrate on participants' stories without distraction. I then transcribed the interviews verbatim, for analytical purposes. The process of transcription fostered immersion in the data which was important when analysis begun. Evers (2011, 8) notes that when the transcription is done by the researcher, it enables a deeper understanding of the data and the researcher becomes '*more conscious* of what is going on'.

My role in the data collection process

Understanding Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology as embedded within context also allowed for my understandings of the structure/agent relationship to play a role in my research and data generation process. Heidegger notes the impossibility of separating the background that has led the researcher to consider a topic worthy of research in the first place from the process of analysis (see also Koch 1995, 831; Dowling 2007; Flood 2010, 10; Bradbury-Jones, Irvine and Sambrook 2010; Lopez and Willis 2004, 729). This resolves the requirement of bracketing one's knowledge as prescribed by other phenomenological approaches as prior knowledge is seen as essential to the research process (Flood 2010, 10; Bradbury-Jones, Irvine and Sambrook 2010, 27; Richardson 1999, 63). This then allows for interpretation to consist of both the experience of participants and that of the researcher who is not required to seal herself off from her own interpretations, theorisations and knowledge of context (Koch 1995, 831; Lopez and Willis 2004, 730; Flood 2010, 10; Bradbury-Jones, Irvine and Sambrook 2010, 27). Given this I was able to acknowledge my constitutive role in both the interview and analytical process of my research such that the proffered interpretation is a fusion of participant experiences and the researcher's prior and developing (contextual and theoretical) knowledge (see Flood 2010, 110). As Lopez and Willis (2004, 729) note, it is this knowledge possessed by the researcher that gives rise to ideas that can produce useful knowledge. This does not however mean that the researcher should not remain vigilantly open to being influenced in her interpretations and theoretical dispositions, by participants' experiences and interpretations of their experiences.

An inductive process of data coding built into the analysis allows the researcher to remain alive to participants' experiences (Flood 2010, 11; Lopez and Willis 2004, 730). *In vivo* coding — codes that

mirror the words of the participants — was particularly useful in ensuring I remained alive to participants' voices before imposing interpretations by way of codes that paraphrase participants' words or that are derived from theoretical constructs (see Saldana 2009). While owning my own (contextually and theoretically informed) analysis of the data, I was thus also concerned to ensure that I remained open and alive to the meanings and understandings of their own experiences brought to the research by my participants (Crotty 1998, 96; Hamill and Sinclair 2010, 17). One way in which this is achieved in practice is by being aware of one's pre-understanding — not in order to eliminate or 'bracket' such understandings but rather to be conscious of when and how prior understandings are informing the analysis (see Ajjawi and Higgs 2007; Koch 1995; Laverty 2003). Thus, while reading the data I was aware of my pre-conceived assumptions and categories, and this awareness enabled me to strive to listen authentically and attentively to the data and understand the experiences of my participants from their own point of view. Laverty (2003, 28) notes that the researcher's pre-understandings and assumptions are 'embedded and essential to [the] interpretive process'. These assumptions were also compared with the emerging interpretation so as to address any prejudice developed from personal experience, theoretical preconceptions and engagement with existing literature (Ajjawi and Higgs 2007). For instance, I was torn between being critical of my participants' stories and being sensitive to them. As a Black woman who thinks from the standpoint of my own positionality I was aware that there could arise a tendency to be dismissive of my White participants' stories[10]. This was resolved by constantly going back to the telling to ensure my reading and interpretation was not affected by my personal assumptions which arose from a contextual distrust of the commitments to transformation of the 'other' who is not 'oppressed'. This was particularly fruitful as it helped with the discussion on the reformulation of interests in which I engaged the possibility for the oppressed and oppressor to become agents of transformation.

After this inductive process of working with the data, the categories derived were then compared to the categories derived from the conceptual framework which I had constructed and the analysis that emerged from the pilot study. A combination of the two allowed for a rigorous infusion of the two in the analytical process (Hamill and Sinclair 2010, 19). Hamill and Sinclair (2010) note that an acknowledgment of the researcher's prior conceptual commitments which influence the process of interpretation and analysis, points to the need to return to participants with interpretations in order to gain further insight through a process of negotiation of imputed meanings (see also Bradbury-Jones, Irvine and Sambrook 2010, 28). Since the Heideggerian phenomenological perspective does not

[10] I do discuss this in detail in the ethics section

require bracketing or separation of the researcher's own interpretations and theories, participant checking in this mould has to do with a negotiation of meaning between participant and researcher. This methodology is consistent with the hermeneutic circle which moves back and forth between interpretation, data and participant (Bradbury-Jones, Irvine and Sambrook 2010, 29; Koch 1995, 831; Dowling 2007, 134).

4.5 Hermeneutic Phenomenological (HP) Thematic Analysis

The data was analysed using a Hermeneutic and Phenomenological thematic analysis. Hermeneutic phenomenological research allows for an analysis of the structure of a phenomenon in context (Flood 2010, 11). In the present study, the goal was an understanding of participants' experience of agency in relation to their context and the structures and cultures within that context. This informed my choice of Hermeneutic Phenomenological Thematic Analysis as an analytical method of understanding interview data in relation to the context in which it was generated (Van Manen 1997). A hermeneutic phenomenological reading and thematic analysis of the data involved reading to understand the data, coding the data and the identification of themes and sub-themes that would illuminate participants' experience and the phenomenon being studied in relation to the structure that gave rise to that experience (see Crotty 1998, 98; Flood 2010, 12; Richardson 1999, 70). Van Manen (1997, 79) notes that such phenomenologically derived themes can be seen as 'structures of experiences…they give control and order to our writing'.

While there are different methods for conducting a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis (see Fleming, Gaidys and Robb 2003; Kafle 2011; Nelms 2015 for different approaches to HPA), I employed the approach advocated by Max Van Manen (1990) drawing from Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology. For Van Manen the method of a hermeneutic phenomenology is writing, it is the research (Van Manen 1997, 124, 125; see also Nelms 2015, 10). Van Manen (1997) notes that to conduct hermeneutic phenomenological research is to ask for the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. He defines thematic analysis as the 'process of recovering themes that are embodied and dramatised in the evolving meaning and imagery of the work' (Van Manen 1997, 78). It must be noted that thematic analysis for other forms of qualitative research is quite different from that of hermeneutic phenomenological research (see Van Manen 1997, 79). Rather than a mechanistic approach of 'frequency count or coding specific sections of the data, the process of phenomenology is not bounded by specific rules but is an act of seeing meaning' (Van Manen 1997, 78). This allows for the researcher to analyse the data in a way that enables her to make sense and meaning of the data.

The aim of this kind of analysis was to determine the structures that make up the experience of having agency to effect transformation (Van Manen 1997, 79).

Since, as noted above, there are no formal rules or procedures for this form of analysis, no pre-given list, technique or systematic way of undertaking analysis in the HP mould (see Van Manen 1984, 67; Koch 1995; Laverty 2003), this gives the researcher the lee-way to design methods of analysis specifically suited to the research. In this instance, I employed both an inductive and a deductive approach to my analytical process (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Thomas 2006). The aim of adopting both approaches was to ground my analysis, findings and themes in the data while at the same time grounding my interpretations in theory and context (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Thomas 2006, 238; Pope, Ziebland and Mays 2000, 114; Thorne 2000, 68; Bradley, Curry, and Devers 2007, 1763). The categories, themes and concepts from these two processes were then compared for new insights.

The process of analysis involved six stages of immersion, understanding (coding), abstraction, synthesis (literature and concepts from pilot study and theory), illustrating the phenomena (writing memos which forms the backbone of the final write up), and integration — saturation. The process of coding was further divided into two stages (first cycle coding and second cycle coding). The first cycle coding included applying different initial coding methods to the data in turn (descriptive, *in vivo* and process coding) (Saldana 2009). The second cycle coding (pattern coding) allowed for the research to move from data and codes to a theoretical and abstract level (Saldana 2009). These coding process allowed for the close examination of the beliefs, values, attitudes, actions, processes and patterns in participants stories which, taken together, provided insight into the moment(s) in which individuals saw themselves/could be seen as having had agency to bring about transformation. I carried out this process of coding using the NVivo data analysis software— to assist with the analytical process. The use of NVivo enabled me to manage the large amount of data generated during the study during the coding process. It is however important to note that such software aids the analytical process from a data management perspective rather than performing the analysis for the researcher (see Pope, Ziebland and Mays 2000; Weitzman 1999; Thorne 2000, 68). The various stages of analysis, from immersion to integration, allowed for constant interpretation of the participants' stories in relation to the context and the phenomenon of 'agency'. The interpretation of the data was sent to the participants for participant checking to allow for a degree of negotiation of the meaning ascribed to, and interpretation of, the participants' experiences (Van Manen 1997, 107).

The purpose of employing an inductive and a deductive approach to my analysis process was to enable a rigorous and deep examination of the participants' experiences of agency. An examination of my theoretical framework yielded concepts that were later compared to categories derived from the data. The initial coding however involved sticking close to the participants' words (*in vivo* coding) to allow for the participants' voices to be heard prominently in the process of analysis rather than being occluded by my own contextual understandings and theoretical presuppositions. It was only after *in vivo* coding that the categories drawn from the theoretical framework concerning the relationship between structure and agency that I had constructed, were compared to the categories drawn inductively from the participants' own words.

Inductive and deductive analysis are thus not mutually exclusive and can both be usefully employed in the analytical process (Berg 2001, 245; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). Inductive analysis involves the researcher deriving categories from the data. This form of analysis allows the researcher to stick, initially, closely to the data and the participants' words (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006; Thomas 2006). Similar to grounded theory, prior knowledge or existing categories do not inform the process of coding or analyzing the data 'at this stage' (Berg 2001, 245). Rather than making a claim to suspending prior knowledge, the process is one in which the researcher resists the tendency to immediately interpret or analyse the data using prior knowledge or pre-conceived categories. As noted above, the pre-conceived notions of the researcher are later compared with the insights drawn from the initial coding process (Ajjawi and Higgs 2007). The aim is to build theory from the data, at least initially. Since there are no formal rules or procedures for HP thematic analysis, there is some flexibility in the design of the analytical process, and this lee-way to design one's own analytical process allows for rigour in processing the data in order to come to understand it more fully (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). Below is a chart of the steps for HP thematic analysis.

Figure 3: The HP Analysis Process

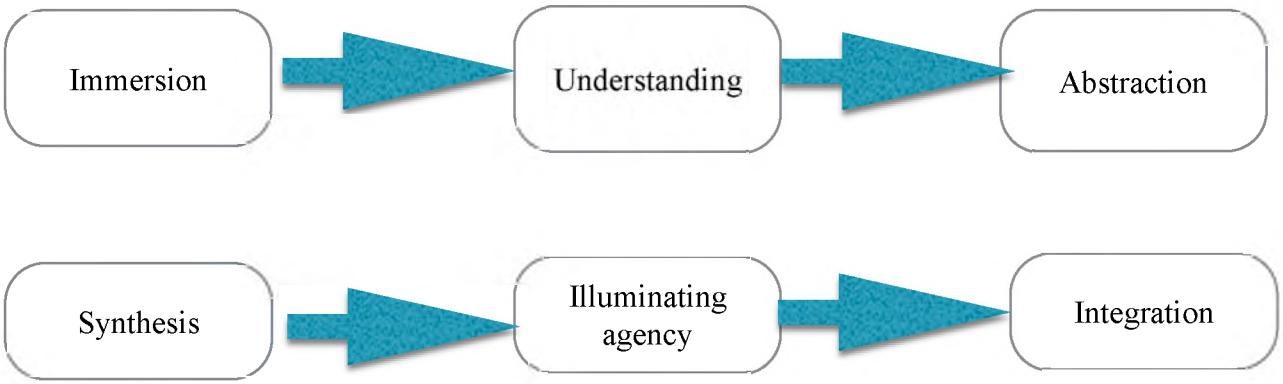

Table 12: Procedure for Thematic Analysis

Deductive Thematic Analysis	
Categories	Pilot Study
	Theoretical Framework

Inductive Thematic Analysis	
Coding	Word Frequency Search
	Attribute Coding
	Descreptive Coding
	Process and *in vivo* Coding
Theming	Pattern Coding

Constant Comparison - Reading Texts

Interpretation and Analysis

The Deductive Process

Table 13: Categories from theory and pilot study

Categories from Pilot study	Categories from theory
Resources	Positions and Practices
Age/Knowledge?Expereince	Roles
Leadership	Interests
Race/gender	Rules and resources
Personal/Individual Charactersitics	Power
Support Networks	Time
Institutional Culture	Strategic Selectivity
Institutional Structure/Processes	

Categories drawn from pilot study[11]

In the pilot study, it was apparent that the participants were working with widely differing understandings of 'transformation' as well as holding divergent views concerning what was constraining or enabling to their ability to exercise agency. The process of initial coding of the pilot study data and category formation from the codes led to eight categories that provided a description of the data and participants' views on what enabled or constrained their efforts at transformation. These included:

Resources;

Experience (age/knowledge);

Leadership;

Race/gender;

Personal/individual characteristics;

Networks;

Institutional cultures and institutional structures

[11] While I define and describe the categories drawn from my pilot study, the categories drawn from the theory are not described because they have been described in the previous chapter.

Also important was the participants' understandings of 'transformation' which was triggered by the use of this word in the global question that framed every interview. The initial coding process yielded eleven definitions that described participants' understanding of 'transformation' which included: quotas/statistics/tick-box exercise; helping Black students; changing language; attracting Black staff and students; changing the culture of whiteness; symbolic decolonisation; community engagement; racism/reverse discrimination; curriculum/pedagogic change; change in research and social justice. These initial findings were reported in a document titled 'Academics' Interpretation of 'Transformation' at Rhodes University'.

Categories from theoretical framework

As noted above, the theoretical framework and key theoretical concepts are important in the analysis process. Following an inductive analysis of the collected data categories distilled from my reading in the theoretical debates concerning the relationship between structure and agency were compared to the themes and categories that emerged from the inductive analysis of the data. The object of this exercise is to add to the inductive interpretation of the data in meaningful ways and to integrate inductively derived concepts with deductively derived concept, comparing and contrasting them in order to arrive at new insights. A total of seven categories were drawn from my theoretical framework that highlight the agency structure problem in relation to possibilities for change or transformation. They include:

- Positions and practices;
- Roles;
- Fields;
- Interests;
- Rules and resources;
- Power;
- Strategy and strategic selectivity[12].

The Inductive Thematic Analysis Process - Coding and Theming

> Themes are not objects or generalisations, they are more like knots in the web of our experience, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived

[12] See theoretical framework for definition of the concepts.

> through as meaningful wholes…themes are only fasteners, foci or threads around which the phenomenological description is facilitated (Van Manen 1997, 90-91).

HP thematic analysis interprets the story of experience; the process of phenomenology is an act of seeing and making meaning (Van Mann 1997). The aim of this type of analysis is to capture the phenomenon that is being investigated (Van Manen 1997, 87) — in this case, 'having the agency to effect transformation'. Themes are born out of the desire to make sense, to open up the data and as Van Manen (1997, 88) notes, the process of theming the data is a process of 'invention, discovery and disclosure'. Themes are utilised here as a tool to get at the meaning of agency. The themes derived from the data 'express the ineffable essence' of agency; they touch the core notion of agency (Van Manen 1997, 88).

In phenomenology, the function of the theme is to reduce the meaning of the phenomenon under investigation to its core notion rather than purporting to completely unlock its meaning (Van Manen 1997). It is the process of writing that opens up the deep meaning of the concept, and themes do the work of facilitating the descriptive, interpretive and writing process (Van Manen 1997). Van Manen (1997, 87) highlights five questions the researcher may ask during this process to guide the analysis:

1. Read over the story and ask what is going on here?
2. What is this example/story an example/story of?
3. What is the essence of the notion of agency?
4. How can I capture this essence of the notion of agency?
5. How can I capture this essence by way of thematic reflection on the notion? (Van Manen 1997, 86).

Focusing on these questions provides a means for the researcher to become immersed in the data, requiring the researcher reading and re-reading the data many times (see Van Manen 1997; Ajjawi and Higgs 2007). The data is read and re-read to identify themes, which may be important to understanding the phenomenon being studied (Van Manen 1997). This phase is important to the analytical process as it enables the researcher to develop theories, overarching concepts and categories inductively in the first instance. Van Manen (1997, 77) describes this as the Hermeneutic Phenomenological Reflection, the purpose of which is to 'grasp the essential meaning of the phenomenon'. Van Manen (1997, 93) describes three broad approaches to uncovering the themes within a phenomenon or data set: the holistic or sententious approach, the selective or highlighting approach and the detailed or line by line approach (I discuss these below). The task of the researcher

is to identify the common themes by lifting appropriate phrases and bringing them to the fore, thereby capturing the essence or meaning of the statement (Van Manen 1997, 93).

Following this procedure, I coded the data in line with the three broad approaches advocated by Van Manen (1997). Codes are words or sentences that summarise, capture the essence or define the meaning of a segment of data. Holist (1969, 94) defines coding as a systematic process of transforming and aggregating data into units which permits a description of the characteristic of that segment of data. Coding requires that the researcher wears an analytical lens and the way the data is coded is dependent on what type of filter covers that lens (Saldana 2009, 6). The process of coding the data is not just labelling but linking, it is the beginning stage of a much more rigorous analysis (Saldana 2009, 8; David and Sutton 2004).

As noted earlier the process of coding involves the researcher wearing an analytical lens, hence my paradigm, research question, theory and data played a role in my choice of coding methods. This led me to three first cycle coding methods and one second cycle coding method (see Saldana 2009). This choice was determined by the goals of my hermeneutic phenomenological study outlined above. Coding methods were selected that allowed for the development of new insights or theory from the data as opposed to imposing pre-conceived categories or notions on the data from the outset. The coding methods selected included attribute coding, descriptive coding which is similar to what Van Manen describes as the holistic approach, *in vivo* coding which is similar to the selective or highlighting approach, process coding which is similar to the detailed or line by line approach and pattern coding which is similar to the process of determining the incidental and essential themes. These forms of coding or approaches to thematic analysis were conducted using NVivo, a computer software programme that aids the process of analysis and management of the elements of a project.

4.5.1.1 Stage 1: Immersion in the text

In order to familiarise myself with the data, the interview transcripts were read and re-read (see Lindseth and Norberg 2004). During the process of reading, I underlined and highlighted sections which struck me or seemed important to me. While this is not similar to coding, this process constituted the beginning stages of getting to know the data. Lindseth and Norberg (2004, 149) note that this process opens up the text and allows it to speak to us. I also conducted a word frequency search and coded for attributes to get a general map of what participants were saying and to understand the various factors that were prominent in participants' stories and experiences. This

process enabled a better understanding of the stories that were told to me and the context in which these stories occurred. The aim of this phase, which Van Manen (1997) describes as immersion, is to get a sense of the data. In this phase, initial interpretations begin to be formulated which facilitates the coding process (see also Ajjawi and Higgs 2007). Understanding participants' stories, including the context in which they occur and highlighting some of the factors that they foreground as having shaped their experiences — for instance race, gender or status — not only facilitates the coding process but also facilitates interpretations of the data in relation to the conceptual framing on the study.

Attribute coding consists of coding the basic information about the characteristics of the participants, for instance age, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. (Saldana 2009, 55). I coded for attributes to understand participants' stories in relation to structural and social characteristics. What is important is that the chosen characteristics are relevant to the theory and question you are trying to answer (Mason 2002, 135). Also important is the relationship between the chosen characteristics (age, race, class) and the context. So, for example, in a context like South Africa, coding for racial characteristics in the data would be more important than coding for race in a country like Nigeria. As a result of the history of apartheid and its enduring legacies, racial characteristics continue to affect individual freedom and access to resources. Informed by my research question and context, the characteristics coded for were race, gender and position. These characteristics were selected because they are important to understanding the data and the data in relation to the context (see Mason 2002, 135). Participants' positions were significant to understanding structural relations and the way in which the participants interacted as individuals with structural formations within the university. It was important that participants be anonymised because of the sensitivity of the information being collected. Each participant was therefore assigned a pseudonym. The table below highlights the results of the attribute coding.

Table 14: Participants

Attribute Coding of Participants			
Pseudonym	**Race**	**Gender**	**Position**
John	White	Male	Professor
Alex	White	Male	Professor
Richard	White	Male	Professor
Carol	White	Female	Professor
Chris	White	Male	Professor
Dana	White	Female	Professor
Daryl	White	Male	Professor
Natalie	White	Female	Snr Lecturer
Tracy	White	Female	Lecturer
Kathy	White	Female	Researcher
Thandi	Black	Female	Snr Lecturer
West	White	Male	Professor
Inga	Black	Female	Professor
James	White	Male	Professor
Max	Black	Male	Professor

Once relevant information about the attributes of the participants has been logged, the researcher is able to refer to this information during the analytical process and when writing (Saldana 2009, 55). Using NVivo software, once attributes are assigned to elements of the data it becomes possible to quickly test emerging hypotheses for their veracity — for example to compare the prominence of a particular theme in the narratives of White versus Black participants or male versus female participants.

Using NVivo I was able to conduct a word frequency search to gain a sense of the data as whole. Using this method, I quickly identified recurring topics and words in the data which were suggestive of avenues for analysis that could be further explored. The idea here is that words that frequently occur may be of importance to the analytical process and understanding the data as a whole. The

researcher must be careful and ensure this is supplemented with subsequent structural analysis which may or may not validate initial insights gained (Lindseth and Norberg 2004, 149). There is a danger of missing important insights into themes if only this technique is employed. Hermeneutic phenomenological thematic analysis thus goes beyond coding for attributes and frequency searches to coding and theming the data both inductively and deductively, and this ensures the process is rich and produces meaningful results (Lindseth and Norberg 2004, 149). Turner (1994, 199 in Saldana 2009) refers to this process as generating a basic vocabulary of data from 'bread and butter' categories to further analytic work. Saldana (2009, 72) further notes that this coding process leads to a categorised inventory or summary of the data's content, yielding words and phrases that represent broadly what the content of the data is about[13]. Using these interlocking processes helped me to tell a clearer story of what I was seeing and reading as I sought to gain insight into, and interpret, the experiences of the participants.

4.5.1.2 Stage 2: Understanding — First Cycle Coding

The second stage that I embarked on involved breaking up the data into meaning units or codes to understand the stories that the participants narrated to me (Lindseth and Norberg 2004). I employed three coding methods in turn here namely: descriptive coding, *in vivo* coding and process coding to open up the data and gain insight into how participants' stories enabled a better understanding of the phenomenon of 'agency'. After I coded for attributes, I conducted a descriptive coding or a holistic reading across the data set to gain an understanding of the data and understand the 'fundamental meaning of the texts' as a whole (Van Manen 1997, 93; Sloan and Bowe 2014; Saldana 2009, 65; Nelms 2015). Descriptive coding enables the researcher to do this by assigning labels to segments of the data which provides a kind of inventory or summary of their topics (Saldana 2009, 65). The aim being to summarise in a short word or phrase the topic of a part of the data or interview transcript (Saldana 2009, 70). It is important to note that these codes, rather than labelling the data or defining an attribute, identify the topic or broad idea in a segment of data (Tesch 1990, 119; Saldana 2009, 70). It is a process in which the researcher must continually make judgements about the data by balancing being sensitive to participant stories, while at the same time retaining an attitude of thoughtfulness and criticality to understand the meaning to be revealed in the data (Van Manen 1997, 94). It is important that the researcher draws a distinction between topic identification and actual coding at this stage. The topic is what is talked or written about and coding is an examination of the

[13] See Appendix H for word cloud on word frequency search.

substance of what is being said (Tesch 1990, 119). This coding process is especially important to analysis as it helps answer the question of what is happening in the data, why, where it is happening and who is doing the telling, in order to move further along with the work of capturing the essence of the phenomenon.

The next process is what Van Manen (1997, 93) terms 'selective reading' and is the actual process of coding and breaking up the data into smaller constitutive parts. As I read and listened to the data I asked, 'what statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about agency?' (Van Manen 1997, 93), in a process similar to the *in vivo* coding process. During the coding process, I ensured that the words that stood out or appeared strange or important were also coded as *in vivo* codes so as to stick as closely to the data as possible in the first instance (see Charmaz 2006). David and Sutton (2004, 204) note that '*in vivo* codes remain true to the diversity of self-description and experience'. The process of selective reading and asking how participant words and phrases revealed agency enabled me to remain true to the voices of the participants before moving to theorisation and reconceptualisation in relation to the overarching theoretical framing of the study in the secondary literature (see Charmaz 2006).

'Process' or 'action' coding was the third and final step of my first cycle coding procedure. The aim of process coding is to highlight observable activity (Saldana 2009). Here the researcher codes for words that connote action, usually ending in 'ing'. I chose this form of coding because it aligned well with the phenomenon being studied, namely 'agency', the aim of which is to examine the actions participants took. Usually done line by line or sentence by sentence or word by word, this type of coding allows for the breaking down of data into discrete parts, closely examining them and comparing them for similarities and differences (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 102 in Saldana 2009, 81). Charmaz (2006, 51) notes that this form of coding helps you look at your data critically and analytically. It also points out gaps that needs to be filled in your data and points you in directions you would have otherwise ignored (Charmaz 2006: 51). I coded for words like 'adapting, being, establishing credentials, circumventing structures, facilitating, seeing, seizing opportunities, fighting and seeing'. This process of coding allows the researcher to reflect deeply on the content and nuances of the data and begin taking ownership of their interpretation (see Saldana 2009, 81). Process coding was the beginning stage that led in the end to my identification of the themes 'coming to consciousness and fighting in the discursive space'.

4.5.1.3 Stage 3: Abstraction — Second Cycle Coding

After the first cycle coding of attributes, descriptive coding, *in vivo* and process coding, I then moved to the second cycle coding process. The abstraction phase, which can also be described as second cycle coding, is a step in which the researcher moves to a more abstract or theoretical level of analysis. During second coding cycle the researcher embarks on a process of re-organising and re-analysing the first cycle codes that have been generated (Saldana 2009, 100). I selected pattern coding to enable my formation of categories. Coding for patterns allows the researcher to group codes into patterns (Saldana 2009, 150). In coding for patterns the researcher does not just group similar codes together but attributes meaning to the emerging pattern. Also, known as 'meta-codes', pattern codes bring a lot of material together into a meaningful unit of analysis (Saldana 2009, 150). I grouped similar codes together to examine their commonality, to be able to describe emergent patterns, and to see if any new insights were made visible by the emergent patterns. This process involves a careful examination of the different codes, searching for similar codes and trying to link them up. Using the NVivo software facilitated this process as I was able to group similar codes together and label them as categories in a systematic way using the tools provided by the programme which ensured completeness and thoroughness in the derivation of patterns. Where a code was found to be very similar to an existing code or category, these were turned into sub themes, thus slowly further reducing the data. Once all the data relating to a group of codes or category was in one place, being able to see the data and codes at once enabled the identification of patterns and creating a trajectory of the various experiences embedded in the data. Nelms (2015, 11) notes that the process of theming involves identifying constitutive patterns in the data. This level of coding allows the researcher to move to a more conceptual level of understanding the data. During this process the researcher brings together the different patterns which have emerged and this enables her to answer questions relating for example to when, where, why, who and what consequences (Charmaz 2006, 63). The primary goal here is to develop themes from the first cycle codes (Saldana 2009, 149). Like the first cycle coding phase, my coding decisions were guided by my research question, my theoretical framework and my mode of analysis. Memo writing persisted throughout this phase as a mechanism of recording interpretations, decision-making, doubts and quandaries.

4.5.1.4 Stage 4: Synthesis and developing themes — The Hermeneutic Cycle

Lindseth and Norberg (2004, 149) define themes as 'a thread of meaning that penetrates text parts, either all or just a few'. This phase involved refining the patterns that were identified during the

abstraction phase through a process of going back and forth between the data, codes, sub-themes, theory, literature and my developing understanding which were reflected in my memos. The hermeneutic cycle is a process of understanding and interpretation where the researcher moves between the parts and the whole (Koch 1995; Mackey 2005; Ajjawi and Higgs 2007; Sloan and Bowe 2014; Wilcke 2002). This is a circular process between the researcher, data, themes, theory and literature where one gives meaning to the other. For Heidegger, interpretation is a circular process where pre-understandings are made explicit and then examined in relation to the whole (Heidegger 1962; Mackey 2005). This process can also be described as a process of constant comparison. After coding the data and developing categories and themes from the codes, I then compared the codes and categories derived from the data with the categories drawn from the pilot study and with concepts in the theoretical framework to develop themes. These categories together enabled me to understand and interpret the structure of participants' experience of having agency to effect transformation. I compared the sub-themes developed from the data, my pilot study and theory to understand not just how context affects action but also how the participants' world views affected their actions and efforts at transformation as well as their interpretations of their own actions.

During this stage the researcher constructs a trajectory of participants' experiences (Van Manen 1997). This enables an understanding of participant's motivations for taking action. For instance, during the coding process, I noticed that in many instances participants alluded to critical events that occurred which led to them taking action. While these segments of the data were coded differently, the process of creating a trajectory of the experiences and comparing participant's stories enabled me to see that certain events or actions in the participants' experiences were 'catalytic' — providing spurs and motivations for taking subsequent actions aimed at transformation. The process of constant comparison is an important way of discovering new categories or new information (Charmaz 2006). The process of coding, categorising, theming and constant comparison of the categories from the data, pilot study and theory, memo writing and rewriting enabled an understanding of having agency to effect transformation. The themes and sub themes derived during analysis were contextualised in relation to the conceptual framework and existing relevant literature. The process of going back and forth enabled the development of two significant themes, namely fighting in the discursive space and coming to consciousness. Nelms (2015, 10) notes that while analysis and synthesis is significant to the research process, for hermeneutic phenomenology, it is the process of *writing* that 'brings forth the meaning, the structure, and the understandings of a phenomenon. The third theme that I highlight

in the thesis, 'reformulating interests' was derived from the process of writing, having conversations and re-writing in order to better understand the data.

4.5.1.5 Stage 5: Integrating and illuminating the phenomenon

While the process of coding and theming the data is essential to the hermeneutic phenomenological method, as noted above, it is the process of writing that allowed for interpretation of the meaning of having agency to effect transformation (see Van Manen 1997, 7, 127-133; 1984, 68; Nelms 2015, 10). This stage was very significant to my analytical chapters. While at that time there was no clear structure of the chapters or thesis, I found that writing down my thoughts, what struck me and how I understood the codes and emerging themes was particularly helpful in writing up the themes. This process has also been described as memo writing (see Saldana 2009; Charmaz 2006). Similar to keeping a reflective journal (Laverty 2003, 28), memo writing is important as the researcher is able to document emerging patterns and ideas about what the data is saying or an emerging thread that one is beginning to discern. Van Manen (1997, 95) describes this as composing linguistic transformation. Here the researcher writes notes based on her reading and research activities. My memos formed the backbone of my final write up, and comprised issues that struck me as important, segments of the data that sparked an allusion to a part of my theory and context and finally new ideas whether they turned out in the end to be significant or not. As Charmaz (2006, 72) notes, 'they catch your thought, capture the comparisons and connections you make and crystallise directions for you to take' (Charmaz 2006, 72). The process of writing memos allows you to critically analyse and interact with your data. The process of memo writing helps explain the researcher's thought process and understanding of the developing theory. Memos allow the researcher to compare data and data, codes and data, codes of data and other codes, codes and categories and codes and concepts (Charmaz 2006, 72). There are no strict rules to writing memos — the researcher or analyst simply writes in an unedited way about what is deemed important to the research question and theory. Charmaz (2006, 72) notes that this process helps you find meanings, understand your codes and serves as the analytic core of your research.

Van Manen argues that writing is fundamental to the research process as it is through writing that we come to know what we know (Van Manen 1997; see also Van Manen 1984; 2006; Nelms 2015, 10). This was very significant for my research process, as while the analysis enabled me to derive codes, categories and themes from my data, it was the process of writing that helped me understand what the data was saying in relation to agency. For instance, after the second cycle coding, 'coming to

consciousness' was identified as a theme. It was however during the process of writing that the 'reformulation of interests' was identified as significant to the process of taking transformative action. The process of writing also enabled an understanding of discursive and material fights as 'battles'. Also the process of writing enabled an understanding of the discursive and material aspects of agency. Nelms (2015, 10) writes, 'writing is a process of self-making and self-consciousness' and phenomenological researchers often do not know what they know until they have it written down (see also Van Manen 1997, 7, 127-133). Thus, while the coding process enabled me develop themes that were pertinent to the data, the process of writing enabled me to understand the essence of agency to effect transformation as reflected in the participants' stories. Writing is thus critical to the process whereby the researcher comes to see, know and understand the phenomenon being studied. Writing memos enables the researcher to keep track of emerging concepts, theory and decision-making. Memos show the researcher's evolving interpretation and understanding of a phenomenon and developing theory related to that phenomenon as the process of analysis proceeds over time (Laverty 2003). In this way, this method is similar to that of grounded theory which focuses on deriving theories grounded in the data and involving a critical analysis of the collected data from scratch which includes coding the data and developing gradually a set of concepts and categories grounded in the data in order to understand the data (see Charmaz 1995; Charmaz 2006; Stern and Porr 2012).

4.5.1.6 Stage 6: Integration — Saturation

The themes that I was identifying through the process described above were discussed with my supervisor who was very familiar with the data and the interpretation refined as I wrote and rewrote the chapters to make explicit my interpretation of the data in relation to the conceptual framework which I had built for the study based on wide reading of secondary literature concerning the structure/agency debate in social science. The process of integration was a very long drawn out process of back and forths, long conversations (debates) both with my supervisor and colleagues in my research group and numerous drafts. Hermeneutic phenomenology requires interpretation rather than description, thus the goal or focus of the analysis was to interpret the participants' experiences of having agency to effect transformation. It is perhaps important to speak about the way in which my final interpretation went beyond coding to an iterative process of data, codes, memos, theory, and categories from the pilot study, literature and conversations with supervisor and colleagues. As Van Manen (1997) notes writing is the most crucial process in HP as it is through the process of writing that one comes to know the phenomenon. While the process of coding opened up the data for me and enabled me to understand participants' experiences of having agency to effect change, it was not the

process of coding that necessarily led to my themes. The process of coding enabled the reduction of the data and the formulation of sub-themes and categories but insight into how the experiences related to the current context was gained from reading the literature and having conversations with members of my research group. While they did not have the in-depth knowledge of my research that my supervisor did, it was useful to explain my themes to them such that they were able to understand their links to agency. These critical conversations and feedback enabled me to discover gaps in my arguments and areas that needed to be explained further given the goal of producing an interpretation that is credible because it 'rings true', and is reasoned and reasonable to a critical listener.

The themes do not just describe the participants' experiences but go beyond the participants' descriptions of the experiences themselves, to interpret the production of these experiences in relation to the whole (Van Manen 1997; Lindseth and Norberg 2004). For instance, the theme on battles describes the ways in which individuals take up material and discursive positions when taking actions aimed at transformation and at the same time discusses the ways in which individuals are discursively and materially produced by their various interactions with the social context. So also do the other two themes interpret participants' actions and choices for action in terms of contextual and individual characteristics. For instance, the reformulation of interests describes one of the ways in which participants came to take action towards change while at the same time highlighting the fact that a particular motivation for this was their critical engagement with their context. Highlighting critical engagement as a sub-theme goes beyond description to understanding how participants came to take action towards change.

During the process of discussion and conversations and drafts submitted to my supervisor, we agreed that the theme on fighting in the discursive space and material fights should be subsumed into one theme of discursive and material agency. The theme was then titled 'battles'. This highlights Van Manen's (1997) argument that it is the process of writing that enables the researcher to know what she wants to say and come to interpret the phenomenon being studied. Important to the final process of analysis is the need to reach saturation before the process is halted (Laverty 2003, 29; Charmaz 2006, 96; Mason 2002). Saturation is reached when no new insights or information can be gotten from a particular data set — at least insofar as the research question that is being posed, is concerned. The process of constant comparison of data with theory, with context, with codes and with categories allows for an awareness of when saturation is reached. After comparing categories drawn from data with categories drawn from theory and the pilot study, I could reach a point of saturation where the

emergent insights were sufficiently robust to enable me to meaningfully report on my findings while at the same time being confident that there would be little to be gained in relation to the research question from further data collection or analysis.

Finally, I want to highlight the importance of reading and reading, engagement with literature and how constant moving between data, theory, writing and conversation generated new insights. Because the goal was interpretation, as I reduced the data from codes to sub-themes and themes, the unused codes were not deleted. I realised that interpretation was not to be gleaned only from the data itself and that perhaps, reading the literature or reflecting on the codes and data may generate new insights which were not emergent from engaging in inductive analysis of the data alone. For instance, while 'pushing transformation', a code derived from 'process coding' was not subsumed into any of the themes, it produced the insight that there were various motivations for action and there was an understanding on the part of participants that made them want to take such actions. So, participants are heard saying things like 'I see, I believed, I wanted to because…, I made it my job, I supported something because…, I had to push for it because…' All these gave the sense of a kind of conviction and motivation for action and they were then incorporated into each of the three themes. It is perhaps important to note that while the processes of coding are listed here in a chronological format, conducting this form of analysis is much more nuanced and messy than that, involving multiple overlapping and iterative loops. For instance, the process of writing memos started during the immersion phase.

Table 15: Themes

Essential Themes and Incidental Themes		
Reformulating Objective Interests	**Coming to Consciousness**	**Battles**
Becoming acculturated: Interests, bind spots and social reproduction	Catalytic moments	Conflicting/fractured spaces
Shifting one's interpretive background: Recognising blind spots	Empathising	Fighting in the discursive space
I now met a new version of me: apprehending information differently	Acknowledging privilege	The materiality of struggles to transform
Alternative Positioning	Becoming knowers	Strategic Competence
Reflexivity		

4.5.1.7 Theme 1: Reformulating Objective Interests

A key finding was that for all participants in the study, the reformulation of their interests was significant to taking action aimed at transformation and this was tied to critical personal engagement with their contexts. The process of analysis, comparing themes and sub-themes with theory and literature, revealed that interests played a major role in the reproduction and transformation process. I asked, what about interests enables the individual to take action towards transformation. Specifically, what about these participants enabled them to take action in the face of a rigid unchanging culture. A key finding was that participants' stories revealed a shift that enable them take action — this I define as the reformulation of interests. To reformulate one's interests is to shift the background against which information is judged. This shift in background enables the individual to apprehend information differently. Reformulation of interests can be seen as arising out of one's critical engagement with one's context. The process of such engagement leads to a shift in one's interpretive background and enables the individual to see and experience things differently. The apprehension of information differently enables the individual to come to consciousness. Once interest is reformulated it then opens up the possibility for change and for the individual to take action towards transformation.

4.5.1.8 Theme 2: Coming to Consciousness

The reformulation of interests was also linked to consciousness where judging information differently enabled participants to see and come to understand their interactions and experiences within the university differently. In the interviews, there was a link between the individuals being aware of, and understanding the need for, transformation and them taking action at a later stage. To come to consciousness is to become a knower, to see one's position in relation to the structural relations in which one is embedded and understand the need for transformation. It is to remove oneself from the norm and recognise the problems with, and benefits of, the space one occupies. Finally it is to realise that one's interests have an inherent structural background but such background can be changed. Coming to consciousness is that moment of conscientisation where the individual is able to see what is wrong with her society, empathise and take action to effect change. This knowing, seeing, awareness, understanding, conscientisation, empathy and consciousness is brought on by a reformulation of interests that then acts as a motivation for change.

4.5.1.9 Theme 3: Battles

The last theme highlights the nature of conflict and struggle that occurs when taking action towards transformation. From the first cycle coding 'fighting in the discursive' space was highlighted as significant to participants' stories. This finding was further confirmed as the process of analysis developed. It was however during the writing stage that the discursive and material nature of such fights or struggles was better understood. I found that structures were maintained or reproduced both discursively and materially -- and agents had to also act on these levels (both material and discursive) when they took actions aimed at transformation. I define battles as the discursive and material modes of taking action to effect transformation (agency) as participants had to engage in various forms of discursive and material struggles to effect change. By discursive I mean engaging in battles or struggles at the level of ideas and ideologies, given that resistance to change often occurs at a discursive level particularly in an institution like a university. The university is a place for the free flow of ideas, ideas which can be used to reproduce or transform existing structures, practices and ways of being. While the university as a context in which discursive agency would emerge as important was perhaps predictable, what was surprising was the material modes and manifestations of discourse that emerged and the ways in which participants took up material positions in response to the need to challenge prevailing structures and practices. By material I mean the actual concrete

experiences of participants as they took action aimed at transformation. Such forms of material agency included bodily productions, verbal attacks and physical responses to their situations on the part of participants.

Overall the three themes described above highlight the fact that having agency to effect transformation in a historically white South African university context goes beyond choice to include the ways in which bodies (intertwined with race, class, gender, sexuality, position and personality) are constructed within the contexts (intertwined with historical and colonial legacies) and how such construction affects in part participants' decision to take action towards change. The decision to take action was also affected by how participants understood such constructions, thus while the pilot study revealed participants taking a defensive position when as they told it, they had for example been accused of being racist, these participants found ways of using such moments as a platform or motivation to take actions aimed at transformation.

4.6 Ethics

Ethical approval for this research was obtained in compliance with the institution's ethical procedures. Key ethical considerations in this research included obtaining informed written consent to participate in the study from all participants. While the method of data collection chosen (in depth interviews) does not pose major risk to the participants in terms of life or death, it is not risk free (Seidman 2006, 60). To this end, participants were asked to sign consent forms which explained the nature of the research. The consent form noted the 'what, to what end, how and how long and for whom' of the research (see Seidman 2006, 61). Specifically, in relation to this research, there was a concern that some of the stories that unfolded in the course of interviews might negatively affect a participant's position for example in a department, if their identities were evident to anyone reading the thesis or subsequent publications despite efforts to anonymise the data. Thus, participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the choice of withdrawing from the study at any point of their choosing. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities. In order to further anonymise participants, the exact ages of the participants were not stated but rather given as a range from young to middle aged to elderly.

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the starting point is the participant's narrative which in the case of the present data set was generated for the purpose of providing insight into the lived experience of being able to effect change to a rather rigid, unchanging structure and culture. Because the goal was

to understand the good and bad experiences, participants' stories were not judged for being right or wrong, rather it was the ethics expressed within the text that was examined (see Landgren 2015, 159). To interrogate the ethics within the stories being told is to acknowledge one's assumptions about the roles and positions of the participants and the ways in which such assumptions may affect the way the researcher receives and interprets the story being told. Landgren (2015, 159) notes that the goal of phenomenological hermeneutics is an understanding of 'the good and bad expressed in the interview…it is not the text itself but the ethics expressed therein that should be investigated'. As I was analysing and reading the stories, sometimes I felt a sense that my race and gender affected the stories being told -- the choices made on the part of the participants were, in other words, not neutral or objective. The interview was an encounter between two human beings who occupy subject positions that shape the interactional context. Some of the stories felt like a sympathetic telling. Rather than judge the participants or the validity of the stories being told, I choose to interrogate the ethics *within* the stories being told. Instead of discarding such stories as having ulterior motives or intentions, acknowledging one's assumptions enables the researcher to incorporate such assumptions into her understanding of the data or story and this may lead to new meaning, knowledge and understanding. To interrogate the ethics within the stories is to allow both contextual and personal/individual constructs into the interpretation process. The role of the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher is to interpret the text rather than judge the text for its correctness (Landgren 2015, 159). Interrogating the ethics within the stories enabled me to gain insight into the experiences of participants who occupied comfortable positions within the university or structures and cultures and yet still chose to take action to effect change. A surface reading may have interpreted such stories as pandering or a false commitment aimed at wanting to look good especially to the Black, female interviewer. Rather than interpreting these participants' stories in this way, interrogating the ethics embedded within the telling enabled me to understand that within such telling there is a redefinition taking place within the individual, which I termed 'the reformulation of interests' in the subsequent analysis.

In addition, given my theoretical framework and the need to examine agential experience as occurring within a specific context and structure, the need to critique participants' experiences was made apparent. While reflecting on the interview sessions in connection with my theory and research question, two things became apparent. The first was my need to stick closely to my participants' words, stories and experiences and the second was to at the same time be able to critique such experiences in relation to context, structures on an institutional level and structural relations. There

was something that haunted the telling's which led me to think about how such telling's are deeply affected by structural relations within the University. Fully recognising the requirements of phenomenology as grounded in individual experience (see Grey 2004, Patton 2002; Holstein and Gubrium 2005), critiquing the participants' stories felt like a betrayal. I wanted to remain true to my participants' telling of their experiences. However, given the role played by my participants' structural context in their actions, beliefs, values and worldview, it was important that I examine how social structures and context affected participants' telling and experience. Paul Saukko (2008, 79) argues that the need to remain true to participants' experiences sometimes blinds the researcher from seeing the social nature of experiences and their interpretation. He further notes the need to remain true to the voice of the participant but at the same time retain the right to be critical of the social structures that give rise to that voice (Saukko 2008, 79). My chosen methodology emphasised the complex relationship between context and experience and at various points I noted the importance of context to action and experience. Therefore, the analytical process and interpretation reflected my recognition of the social nature of my participants' experiences.

4.7 Trustworthiness, Quality and Rigour

Throughout this chapter, I alluded to the ways in which my methodological approach and techniques enhanced the quality, trustworthiness and rigour of my analysis. Firstly, I highlighted the way in which transcribing the data myself allowed access into each of the participants' narratives. Throughout the process, I kept detailed written records of my thoughts and emerging hypotheses in the form of memos as I transcribed, coded and analysed. Secondly, I noted the way in which the deductive and inductive processes of analysis employed ensured rigour in the development of insights from the data. These twin analytical processes enabled me to understand and interpret participants' experiences in relation to their context, in relation to the theoretical framework developed for the study and in relation to prior research (see Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). Rigour in hermeneutic phenomenology is achieved during the multiple stages of interpretation that allow interpretive patterns or themes to emerge (Laverty 2003, 31; Koch 1995). The process of analysis from immersion to integration enabled the development of themes that explained the essential structure of the phenomenon of having agency to effect transformation. Thirdly, I noted the way in which the use of the NVivo software programme enabled the management of the data and coding process. Research has shown that using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) allows for rigour in the analytical process (see Welsh 2002; Siccama and Penna 2008; Cavanagh 1997; Tesch 1990; Siccama and Penna 2008; Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2011). The use of CAQDAS, in my case

NVivo, provided a method for coding, theming and managing codes and themes in ways that helped to ensure that I worked with the data systematically rather than in a haphazard or arbitrary fashion. As Welsh (2002) notes analysis using software helps to ground theory in data making it more difficult to ignore or overlook features of the data that do not confirm one's pre-judgements or which appear inconvenient from the point of view of a favourite hypothesis or theoretical conceptualisaiton. NVivo was especially important to my analytical process of coding, categorising and constant comparison. While NVivo does help with the analytical process, it must be noted that it does not analyse data for the researcher (see Leech and Onwuegbuzie 2011). The researcher needs to first have knowledge and understanding of the process of analysis, in order to use NVivo appropriately.

The aim of hermeneutic phenomenology is not to discover the whole truth about the phenomenon under investigation but to search for meaning in relation to the phenomenon being studied (Lindseth and Norberg 2004, 151). Thus, my analysis in this thesis, rather than reflecting the whole truth about agency in the experiences of my participants, highlights an interpretation of agency in relation to these participants' experiences (Lindseth and Norberg 2004; Laverty 2003). In qualitative interpretive research, rigour and validity is achieved if the research tells a story that describes and interprets experience on the basis of a rich and detailed description of the data leading to a believable interpretation of the phenomenon being studied (Neuman 2006, 91). The researcher provides organising concepts or categories that enables a detailed description of a phenomenon (Neuman 2006, 92). Theory is valid or accurate if it makes sense to those being studied and enables other readers to understand better, or gain new insight into, the experiences of those being studied (Neuman 2006, 92). While research in this mode does not aim for statistical generalisation or representivity, it allows for the emergence of an analysis that is conceptually generalisable or extendable into other contexts and infused with contextually relevant interpretation that others will find meaningful in the generation of insight into their own context (Neuman 2006, 92). Because meaning is arrived at by both the researcher and the participant, hermeneutic phenomenology allows for more than one interpretation of the data yielding an integration of perspectives that enriches analysis (Lopez and Willis 2004, 730; Nelms 2015, 15).

In addition, to ensure quality, the research must demonstrate a systematic method of data collection and analysis (Ajjawi and Higgs 2007, 613). Data was collected over a period of six months. A variety of different structures in the university were approached separately in order to recruit participants in a way that was systematic and guided by multiple perspectives on the question of who should be

included in the study. The process of creating codes, sub-themes, themes, and constant comparison as well as the writing of memos at every step which recorded decision making, emergent interpretations and contradictions, enhanced the reliability, validity and transferability of the analytical insights which I report here. In line with the hermeneutic phenomenological imperative for the researcher to make her assumptions clear (see Lowes and Prowse 2001; Lopez and Willis 2004, 729), memo writing helped me to keep a record of my assumptions and to compare them with my emerging themes and interpretations. My focus was on understanding, interpreting, providing thick description, and creating a picture of the phenomenon being studied which was always embedded in the details of a specific context (Van Manen 1997; Neuman 2006).

4.8 Conclusion

I have outlined here the methodological procedure employed in answering the question 'How do individual academic staff members at Rhodes university experience having agency to effect transformation in the university?' Inherent in this question is an understanding of my research's needed to enable me to construct theories grounded in experience. The study thus falls within a hermeneutic phenomenological interpretive view that sees humans as having the agency to make conscious decisions and choices. The hermeneutic phenomenologist is concerned to tell a story about how the individual experiences a particular phenomenon in relation to her context and how such contextual experiences affect the choices she makes and actions she takes (see Lopez and Willis 2004, 729).

In-depth interviews provided a means through which individual experiences could be accessed in order to enable an understanding of agency as experienced by the participants in the present study. The interviews were conducted with individuals who had been identified as making a contribution to the transformation process at the university. The interview sessions explored individual experiences of having agency to effect transformation and the enabling and constraining factors that they experienced. HP Thematic analysis, in line with my ontological and theoretical perspective, provided a means for an understanding of experience as situated within a specific context.

While individuals have certain autonomy and freedom to make choices, these choices are always affected by the social and structural relations within the context they find themselves in. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach taken here recognises the role played by the social setting or structures in shaping individual choice. Hence my argument that both structure and agents interact

and affect each other without one necessarily pre-determining the other. While we have agency to make our choices and decisions, these choices are always affected by the structures and context which we find ourselves. However, while I recognise the effect of structures, structural relations and contexts on individual actions and experience, a greater emphasis is placed on the individual's experiences rather than on determining role played by structures.

5 Chapter

Reformulating Interests: The possibility for critical personal engagement

5.1 Introduction

> It has to do with certain notions of class and status and so on. So, if you are not aware of those social relations that are governing conduct at Rhodes, you're not going to be able to bring about certain changes (Max).

This chapter examines one of the essences of having the agency to effect social transformation. I argue that the reformulation of interests enables consciousness as a condition for an actor's ability to deploy their agency and to effect transformation. I describe the reformulation of interests as a shift in an actor's interpretive background, arising from critical engagement with her context. I argue that once this shift occurs the individual is able to interpret her experiences differently and become aware of blind spots – an ability to see for example ways in which her actions or non-actions might be contributing to injustices in previously unacknowledged or unnoticed ways. As Max notes, knowing and being aware of dominant social relations does play a role in a person deciding to take action to effect transformation. Maitra (2013, 360) argues for the view of agency as the formulation of choice and not just making choices. I argue that seeing beyond one's own experiences and being able to see the 'other' is especially significant in a society like South Africa where experience is highly structured along the lines of race. Racial categories often blind us from seeing the other and from recognising the relations of domination in our context.

In line with the argument for the reformulation of interests as a condition for agency to effect transformation, Bob Jessop (1996, 124) argues that agents possess the capacity to reflect on their context and reformulate their identity and interests amid enabling and constraining conditions. In this chapter I hence argue for the 'reformulation of interests' as a condition that enables the individual to become an agent of transformation. I also argue that a critical personal engagement with one's context is implied in individuals taking action that leads to a transformation of oppressive structures, cultures and practices, and that reflected in the reformulation of interests is the participants' personal engagement with their context. Furthermore, Susan Babbitt (1997, 378) argues for the political role of understanding acquired through personal engagement and activity — that is the role played by an

individual's critical personal engagement in enabling understanding and awareness of the relations of domination within one's context — which may lead to taking action towards transforming such relations. The participants' narratives give an account of individuals who, in light of reformulating their interests, were able to take action that engendered transformation amid limiting and enabling structures. For some participants, taking action that enabled transformation meant acting in ways that revealed a reconfiguration of their interests. I define the reformulation of interests as arising out of one's critical engagement with one's context. The process of such engagement leads to a shift in one's interpretive background (Babbitt 1997, 374) — and enables the individual see and experience things differently. Implied in the reformulation of interests is the transformation of the actor, which shifts the background against which information is judged. This shift enables the individual to apprehend information and experiences differently, so that they are able to interpret their experiences in a new way. The apprehension of information differently enables the individual to come to consciousness. Once interest is reformulated and the individual comes to consciousness, it then opens up the possibility for the individual to take action towards transformation.

This chapter highlights the interplay between historical contexts (structural capacities) and personal characteristics (agentic properties) when an action that may be termed transformative is taken. It examines how historical and social contexts partly determine the agent's life or experiences within a particular institutional context and how agents reflecting on their experiences within such contexts respond. The embeddedness of these individuals in their historical and social contexts as a catalyst for transformative actions is explored. An examination of the link between how historical and social context and personal properties makes and unmakes individuals or influences/colours an individual's lens or views, enables an understanding of later transformative acts embarked on by these individuals. The chapter argues for the reformulation of interests as a necessary condition for the individual becoming conscious and then taking action.

5.2 Becoming Acculturated: Interests, Blind Spots and Social Reproduction

> However the harsh reality is that those who are academics and those who have PHDs and who may be very knowledgeable about particular issues in science don't necessarily conduct themselves that way outside of their academic lives. They don't subject everything to the same scrutiny and the same dispassionate analysis as they would in their field of sociology or marine biology or chemistry and so on. So at that level, the people who occupy a university and especially those who are academics and administrators and so on, have many blind spots. They just don't

> know any better, they are in that sense not very different from, let's just call them lay people, who do not have academic backgrounds and PHDs and so on. Others simply have become acculturated in a particular way, where they see everything as simply natural. It never strikes them that this could be natural for them, coming from their backgrounds, but is not natural for everyone, for people coming from other nationalities or language or traditions and cultures and so on, and that it is quite alienating for other people and therefore you need to open yourself up to reality, to disrupt your comfort so that others may feel as equally at home as you are even though for a while you may feel uncomfortable. We would all have to go through those changes and pains in order to create something new. The creation of something new is always a painful business (Max).

Interests are conferred on individuals within specific contexts by virtue of their connection to specific groups and depending on their position within such contexts (Giddens 1979, 189; Callinicos 2004, 174). Giddens defines interests as 'a potential course of action in contingent social and material circumstances' (Giddens 1979, 189). For Giddens (1979, 189) having interests does not just mean having desires or wants. While the idea of wants does play a role in our understanding of interests, Giddens maintains that having interests implies knowing how to achieve those wants (Giddens 1979). It implies a potential course of action to achieve a goal. What is significant about Giddens' argument is that it highlights the link between interests, awareness, knowledge and action; that is, the way in which interests can influence what one sees (see Giddens 1979; Archer 1995; Callinicos 2004). As Callinicos (2004, 174) argues, one's position may set limits to what they do or do not see. Max points to the twin processes of reproduction and transformation, and the role of interests and blind spots in the choice of a course of action taken by an individual. His comments point also to the role of critical personal engagement which enables a reformulation of a person's perception of their interests and how this is relevant to the transformation process. As Max notes within some contexts, when confronted with the imperative to transform, there are those who will ignore such imperatives and those who respond to them. Such refusal or acceptance can be explained in terms of interests where those who experience the system as uncomfortable will want to transform it and vice versa (Archer 1995; Giddens 1979). Max further divides those who do not take action towards transformation into two groups. Firstly, there are those who do not critically subject their everyday relations within their context to the same scrutiny as they do their disciplines. These are knowledgeable agents but their knowledge does not necessarily translate into actions aimed at transformation. The second group are those who have become so 'acculturated' or comfortable with such relations of domination that they find it difficult to see their privilege and the oppression of others within their context. Max however highlights a significant similarity between these two groups, which is that they have blind spots.

Pittarello *et al.* (2015) describe blind spots as a 'limited attention to ethical consideration', and argues that in any situation in which self-interests is pitted against being ethical and honest, the individual is inclined to choose her self-interests. Bazerman (2014 in Pittarello *et al.* 2015, 802) also argued that in ethically tempting situations people will be guided by their self-serving motivations, what he called 'blind spots'. Similarly, Sezer, Gino and Bazerman (2015, 76) note that implicit bias does play a role in the choices made by individuals, especially when such decisions involve a 'tradeoff between their self-interests and the interests of future generations' (see also Gino, Moore and Bazerman 2010).

What these arguments imply is that there is a link between blind spots, interests and social reproduction. That is, those who reproduce systems of domination do so because it is in their interests to do so. Importantly these arguments highlight the fact that the choice of reproduction may not always be an intentional one. The idea here is that sometimes our interests can create blind spots when making decisions or choices. These arguments for the link between blind spots and interests are particularly important as they speak to Max's narrative. In a South African context where the imperative to transform is sweeping across many a university in a mode of fervency[14], tradeoffs are necessary for transformation to occur. As Max's narrative reveals, the tradeoff here is between these academic self-interests of enjoying comfortability and the painful, uncomfortable process of transforming oppressive structures and cultures to make the society better. Because it is not in their self-interests to transform, seeing or acknowledging that the social relations may be oppressive for some people in the university becomes ethically impossible. The result of these blind spots is then a reproduction of structures, cultures, practices and relations of domination within that context. It can also be argued that these blind spots can be seen as a strategy to ensure that things remain the way they are. These blind spots are strategies deployed by individuals to maintain oppressive structures and relations. For instance, an individual may say they do not see how their comments or actions were racist or sexist or enable the marginalisation of certain individuals. The deployment of selective blindness can be seen as a strategy to ensure the reproduction of oppressive relations. I discuss this in the next section.

Before moving on to my next point I want to address an assumption inherent in the argument that those who experience the system as comfortable will want to maintain it and those who see it as constraining will want to transform it. While this is true for some if not most in any given social situation, it assumes the notion of choosing pleasure over pain where individuals will want to

[14] This is evident in the recent nationwide student protests discussed in the introduction.

maximise pleasurable situations by either reproducing them if it pleasurable and changing them for one's pleasure if it is constraining. However as Max notes, the process of transformation is a painful one both for the dominant and the dominated, thus it is possible that even if the process is painful, it may be in the interests of both the dominant and the dominated to pursue transformation as an end goal. Thus, individuals may rationally forfeit pleasure in the now based on an understanding that discomfort is, for example, necessary in order to behave ethically. This highlights my argument for the reformulation of interests. While it may be in their interests to pursue reproduction rather than transformation, a reformulation of interests leads to a shift in their interpretive background or what is considered pleasurable — such that in the end these individuals can be said to be actually opting for the pleasure of being ethical, thus are still acting in their (reformulated) self-interests even though it is a painful process.

Giddens however argues that to say interests imply comfortability or pleasure is to subscribe to a utilitarian style of thinking because an action which causes pain can also be in an individual's interest (Giddens 1979, 189). If it is the case the that those who do not take action towards transformation have no interest in doing so, as has been highlighted by scholars such as Archer (1995) and Giddens (1979, 190), then it must be the case that those who choose to take action that leads to transformation have an interest in the latter and are critically engaged with their context in such a way that they understand this. The question then becomes how do we explain such (reformulated) interests and critical engagement with context? I argue that for any actor in any social setting, critical personal engagement with the context enables the individual to shift her interests so that she will want to take actions towards transformation. Thus while it may be true that those in comfortable positions will want to reproduce the structures, it is possible that if the individual is able to subject her 'everything' to a critical analysis as Max notes or if there is a critical personal engagement with her context — then the social relations of oppression and domination become understood as abnormal and unnatural, thus in need of being transformed. It is because the social relations are understood as natural and normal that we do not see the need to change them. In the same vein, while it may be true that people who experience the structures as constraining will want to transform them, the question is 'does such want translate to action?' I think not and maintain that there is a distinction between wanting to take action and actually taking action – and that wanting turning into action needs to be explained rather than taken for granted. Sandra Lee Bartky (1977, 25) notes that it is possible to recognise one's victimhood and even lament such oppressive conditions without necessarily seeing the possibility for transforming such conditions. Similarly, Jean Paul Sartre (1984, 434) notes that the decision to change

an existing state of affairs can only come from an apprehension of an objective lack. The act of transforming or decision to transform an oppressive state of affairs comes from an understanding that there is something lacking in the current state of affairs (Sartre 1984, 434). That is if there is no recognition of a problem with the existing state of relations, then there will be no action aimed at changing such affairs. I argue that understanding this lack and subsequently taking action aimed at transformation, arise from the individual's critical engagement with her context or subjecting her experiences and interaction to a critical analysis.

How do we then interpret the process of turning wants into actions by those who do take action? While there are contextual explanations for the inability to translate such desires into actual actions, for example, lack of access to resources and various forms of capital which many Black and female participants highlighted, I argue that there are also factors internal to the individual which come into play (see Babbitt 1997). In arguing that if a person does not critically engage with her context or subject the world outside her discipline to critical scrutiny and analysis — that it may be difficult for the individual to translate such wants into action, Max highlights a point relevant to the understanding of the relationship between interests and acting to engender transformation. He notes that taking action towards transformation is motivated by a critical engagement with one's context. For those who do not take action towards transformation, there is no critical engagement with their context for it is this kind of engagement that enables individuals to re-formulate their interests so that transformation and acting to effect transformation is seen as desirable. The implication of this is that critical personal engagement is necessary for taking action towards transformation as it enables the individual to shift the background against which her experience is interpreted (Babbitt 1997). I define this shift in interpretive background as the reformulation of interests. The implication of this argument is that integral to having the agency to take action towards transformation is the reformulation of one's interests which is informed by critical personal engagement. I argue that the shift in 'interpretive background', enables the agent of transformation to interpret his/her experiences such that he/she wants to bring about transformation (see Babbitt 1997). Critical personal engagement and reflexivity enables the transformation of the individual which makes the reformulation of their interests possible. Once this shift occurs, the individual is able to see differently – new lenses eliminate pre-existing blind spots.

5.3 Shifting one's Interpretive Background: Recognising Blind Spots

As noted above, there are people who have knowledge about their context but such knowledge does not necessarily translate into actions aimed at transformation. If it is the case that having knowledge does not necessarily mean taking action aimed at transforming, then there is a distinction between those who have knowledge – who 'get it' – but who do not take action and those who do take action. The task is to account for the conditions that cause/enable one individual to take action and not the other. I argue that the essential distinction is the reformulation of interests — that what distinguishes the agent of change from the non-agent of change is the ability to reformulate one's interests which is made possible by the recognition of one's blind spots. Once this occurs, the individual is able to do something with that knowledge, to see that knowledge differently. To reformulate one's interests, to recognise one's blind spots is to critically engage with one's context and this critical engagement as Max notes involves scrutinising one's 'everything'; it is to critically analyse the context, the implication of being in that context and the role one plays in that context. Such critical engagement and scrutiny then enables the individual to become aware of blind spots and shift their understanding of their experiences and interactions. This then opens up the possibility for taking action to effect transformation. As Babbitt (1997, 380) notes, the argument here is that, 'it is not that people sometimes need to engage with others to discover the submerged self, but rather engaging with others in personally and politically appropriate ways is necessary to bring about the conditions that make being an integrated self, possible in the first place'. It is thus possible to be aware of the situation and to know the problems. However, if there is no critical personal and political engagement of such knowledge and with such understanding, then it may not translate into the individual taking action to effect change

As Max notes, those who know do not conduct themselves that way, their blind spots makes it impossible for them to understand or acknowledge the conditions or their positions within their context and the implications. They know for example that the post-apartheid context is different, that this context is a shared one with another and that this has implications for the way they should interact, relate and conduct themselves within such contexts —but they are unable to acknowledge this implication and let it reflect in their actions and ways of interacting within their context. What this speaks to is the fact that reformulating interests is not just about knowing but moving a step further to recognising areas in which your ethical judgment may be limited and acknowledging the implication of your role and position within a specific historical context. This then leads to subsequent action taken in the light of new information or the information being read/apprehended differently.

So just knowing is not enough but moving from the ideational to practice/praxis, from experiencing your context in a certain way to apprehending it in such a way that enables one to see the need and possibilities for change.

The link between recognising blind spots and reformulating interests is also highlighted by Alex who refers to the difference between what one might know to be the right thing to do 'in theory' and doing something in practice where one will be 'directly affected'.

> But as I say, I think where we are at the moment which is you know the reality is we have more male than female staff and the majority of staff are White, I think we face very real, very difficult challenges, [for example] our policy on appointments. So if we sit and say in theory these are the rules, these are the requirements the department needs these for a lecturer level appointment. As soon as you have an example that actually directly affects you in your department, it is no longer as easy to accept that and it is a sort of standard problem across the University, in theory yes this is the way we must go, but then when it comes down to practice, it becomes much more difficult. We had an instance and it is a single instance where I was chairing a selection committee and we had to shortlist candidates, one who was a member of a designated group, and the other who was a White male South African, but I just insisted that he applied the policy as it stands, this person meets the requirements and in fact more than meet the requirements. So the White male will have brought a stronger research track record but wouldn't have done anything for improving, increasing diversity. So all the benefits that comes from having diversity, you know a greater diversity in the staff, would have been lost and that was three years ago, the person I have just signed off on the probation report, the person's doing really well, I'm sure he will be promoted in a year's time, he has attracted a nice post grad group, he has brought in a much greater diversity amongst the postgrad students in the Department. So that was an example where that had to happen, but the majority of the committee members when not at all happy…the committees was incredibly upset when I insisted that we had no choice (Alex).

As noted above, reformulating interests enables the individual to see or recognise 'blind spots'[15] which other committee members who also have access to the same knowledge and experience of the context do not do. To have a blind spot, Blakeley (2007, 5) argues, is to 'refuse to notice or pay attention to information and ideas coming'. Alex's analogy of the difficulty of shifting from theory to practice, highlights the problem of blind spots, which is the difficulty with making ethical judgments when it is against one's immediate perception of self-interests. The problem with blind

[15] When I refer to blind spots, I do not refer specifically to one race, gender or particular social group. We all have blind spots, see Krysan and Bader's (2009) study which examined the ways in which 'blind spots' may constitute one barrier to integrative mobility.

spots is that they ensure the reproduction of dominant structures. One of the effects of dominance is that it has the capacity to produce these blind spots — what we perceive is in part determined by the way in which relations of domination and subordination render some things invisible to us and make some things seem natural and normal while other things seem weird. As Blakeley notes, blind spots 'become a problem when they prevent us from learning and adapting to change' (Blakeley 2007, 5). In Alex's case, shifting from theory to practice is very difficult but critical personal engagement enables the individual to understand the need for transforming and to move from knowing something in theory to being willing to put into practice an idea that seems at first to be threatening or discomforting. Alex is able to understand that given the historical context of South Africa and the University, his department should reformulate its perception of how to prioritise its interests from the taken-for-granted assumption that a strong research record should be a priority in selecting an academic candidate to realising that the candidate who is capable of fostering diversity is a priority in this moment. Interests reformulation hence enables the individual take action in-spite of constraints or the disapproval of others. This involves combining knowledge about the context and problems within the context with taking action to change or becoming critically engaged, which is what distinguishes the agent of transformation from those who deliberately want to reproduce the existing structure or those who chose to do nothing with their knowledge as well as those whose knowledge is occluded by blind spots such as taken-for-granted assumptions about what is 'better', who is a good 'fit' and what ought to be prioritised. The combination of such knowledge and engagement brings about the reformulation of interests and enables the move from knowing to understanding and to taking action.

Babbitt (1997, 380) argues that the effect of critical personal engagement is that, 'rather than the individual requiring information in order to make the right choices, the individual sometimes has to make choices, take action first in order to bring about the conditions under which information, if available can be properly approached'. In this sense, the individual has to take action before the condition under which s/he understands and his/her experiences can change. Put differently critical engagement opens up the possibility for the information basis (the way in which the individual apprehends/understand information/experiences) to change. I argue that reformulating interests is that initial choice that enables this move. The individual does not just know, but is critically engaged with his or her context. This is evident in Alex's narrative when he speaks of the benefits that comes with having diversity, information that some members of the committee had, but the information was not apprehended in such a way that enabled making the choice to take action towards transformation. As

Alex notes, they were unhappy and upset, because they thought it was not in the best interests of the department to appoint the Black person. It is not that the committee members were wrong in wanting to appoint the White person or could not see the benefits of appointing the Black person, it is what the information did to them. In discussing the role of information in an individual choosing what is in her best/rational interest, Babbitt (1997 381) argues that the question is not what the individual does with the information but 'what the right kind of information does to the individual?' Reformulating interests enables the individual to apprehend such information differently, such that they want to take action that brings about change. To be critically engaged then, is to come to know, acknowledge and understand the problems and implications of one's position vis-a-vis others within that context.

When Max speaks of 'subjecting everything to scrutiny', he highlights a process essential to critical personal engagement. To subject everything to scrutiny is to come to recognise one's blind spots. Implied in the reformulation of interests is subjecting everything to scrutiny which is what Alex has done. As Max and Alex note, engaging critically is subjecting our experiences within our context to the same scrutiny as we would our disciplines and applying the rules both to others and ourselves. The point is if we do, just as you begin to see and understand the argument's strengths and weaknesses when you read a text, so also does the agent begin to see and understand the problems within his or her specific context and the need to change. When we subject our experiences to scrutiny we are able to see the problems and how we are implicated within such problems and it is from this point that we decide on what course of action to take. As Max notes, those who know but who choose not to act, remain in their discipline and refuse to deal with their situational contexts hence the reformulation of interests is impossible as there is no engagement. Blind spots may or may not prevent an individual from reconceptualising her interests and seeing the need to change or transform. This does not mean that those who refuse to enact change or move are not agents. They are because there is a choice being made whether we decide to or not to take action. It is however the case that it never strikes them that others may experience the context differently from them, so they do not see beyond their world. Thus, implied in the reformulation of interests is an acknowledgment of the changing situational context that the individual is implicated in. If we do not see or acknowledge then we cannot take action, there is no need to. Taking action can hence only arise in the context of critical engagement. Archer (1995) argues that those who experience the structures as enabling will want to reproduce such structures and cultures and this explains the 'inability to shift' as a choice, so as to ensure the current ways of being are maintained. It suits and serves their interests, so why change it? This process of being

'acculturated' confers vested interests that ensures the reproduction of structures. The process of acculturation erases the possibility of seeing contradictions within their contexts and the relations of domination (see Callinicos 2004, 158). Like fish in water, they cannot see that the other experiences that context differently. Acculturation's erasure of dominant relations, thus works in favour of the one who enjoys comfortability because it means that such oppressive relations can be maintained. By subjecting everything to scrutiny, the individual may be able to see such dominant relations.

Furthermore, implicit in the reformulation of interests is 'opening up yourself', recognising the context and its problems, and 'disrupting your comfort' — not in the sense of resistance but by acknowledging the problems within your context, which then creates the possibility for doing something about it. To reformulate one's interests is to, given one's understanding, try to create something new. As Max notes and as is evident in Alex's narrative, this is a 'painful business because it involves removing the self from the acculturated space, from the place of comfort and taking action that may be very difficult. Chris tells a similar story:

> But there are lots of academics who will say, whose heads are completely in the…White academics whose heads are completely in the in the White world and the imagination doesn't stretch any further. But that is not something that they decide, okay I have decided, this is going to be my sphere of concern, this is how I am going to see the world, feel my way through the world, this is the apparatus, the lens through which I am going to say to walk, I chose that rather than a mask or whatever we want to call it, I don't think it works that way, it is much more complex and messy than that and I think that is why structures can be entrenched, that is one of the reasons structures become entrenched because we become entrenched, because we are not so straightforward (Chris).

The inability to shift can in some instances be seen as a choice to maintain oppressive structures. Not seeing, sometimes is a deliberate thing -- a means through which whiteness for instance preserves itself (Ahmed 2007; Bonilla-Silva, Goar and Embrick 2006). If race can be described as a structure and it has vested interests (see Archer 1995; 2007), then one's interests is partly determined by one's whiteness or blackness (since they may be inherited) such that one's action is conditioned in a way by the interests attached to one's race, class, gender, or sexuality in a society in which powers and privileges are structured along these (among other) dimensions. Given this, in a context where the history of apartheid has pitted White, male and the middle-class interests against Black, female and working class interests, it will be expected that those in the dominant position (White, male, heterosexual and the upper/middle class) will want to reproduce the structures as it preserves their

interests and those in a subordinate position (Black, female, homosexual and working class) may want to change such structures as it is oppressive to them. In such a case, reformulating one's interests would enable one to 'see' the problem within the structure in which one is implicated and to critique such structures. It hence means stretching one's imagination and removing one's self from the comforts of one's world to see the 'other'. As Archer (2007) argues, we are not just unwitting subjects that are inhabited by norms and discourses. Hence even if they condition our actions, there is a process within, which decided first if those norms are good before internalising them (Archer 2007). So for the privileged in the context described above, while their heads are in the White world, for some White actors, there is an element of choice in remaining in such worlds which may be accounted for through vested interests (see Archer 1995; Giddens 1977; Callinicos 2004). This, like Max, Alex and Chris's narratives reveal, does not mean they are not knowledgeable about the context but it is in their interest to remain in such worlds and not make the shift.

5.4 'I now met a new version of me': Apprehending information differently

In a racially structured society racial identity endows one with certain blind spots which prevents the individual from seeing or becoming aware of relations of domination. However, while sometimes not seeing is a way in which whiteness preserves itself as noted above, it must be noted that one's race or gender does not necessarily force one into confinement — in the sense of if you are White then you will want to reproduce existing inequalities — as noted earlier we are not unwitting subjects, we still have the capacity for choice. As Alex notes:

> It comes back to something that various people have spoken about and that is how we conflate the colour of your skin and your ability to be an agent of transformation. And yes often a Black person can be an agent of transformation but often a Black person won't be and often a White person can be an even greater agent of transformation and change than a Black person and equally a White person can be very stuck in the woods and not able to drive change at all…but I suspect that, I think a White male is in a strong position to drive change, it doesn't mean to say they will (Alex).

The implication of Alex's point is that it is possible for the one who enjoys privilege and comfort to want to change rather than maintain the status quo and for the oppressed or subjugated to want to do nothing. In stating my argument, this possibility is acknowledged and hence I do not assume that the factors that cause/lead to taking action are given. On the contrary I argue that these factors are mediated by a variety of factors including the personal, social and political. My argument is that it is

not a given that a Black or female individual will always want to change the system or that a White male individual will always want to reproduce the system, as Alex points out. The argument hence acknowledges that there are other social and political factors that mediate the process of taking action to effect change. Following Bartky's (1977, 25) argument that there is a distinction between the individual who knows and laments about her oppression and the individual who is able to imagine a change in such oppressive structures, I emphasise this distinction and argue that the Black female/oppressed may experience the structures as oppressive, yet not necessarily want change or envision the possibility for change – but may instead want to assimilate into such structures.

Describing this distinction, Babbitt (1997, 372-373) notes that it is possible for the oppressed to have knowledge and access to full information, but still decide not to choose an action that may lead to transformation. hooks (1999, 55) makes a similar argument when she writes, 'just as it has been necessary for Black critical thinkers to challenge the idea that Black people are inherently oppositional, are born with critical consciousness about domination and the will to resist, White thinkers must question their assumptions that the decision to write about race and difference necessarily verifies antiracist behaviour'. hooks's argument here, among other things, is that one's capacity to engage is not limited to one's race and that the assumption that resistance and critical consciousness can occur outside critical engagement must be questioned both for the one who occupies the dominant position and the one who occupies the position of the oppressed. The point here is that though positions such as race and gender endow one with interests, the actions or the capacity to act towards change are not finally determined by one's skin colour or race as there are other factors that mediate this determination. The implication of this is that both for the oppressed/subjugated and marginalised and for the dominant/oppressor there is a level of shift or change in interests that is needed to take action that engenders transformation. The ability of those participants who can be considered to occupy subordinated positions in the dominant institutional/social structure to take action that effected change in spite of the experience of oppression or in the face of marginalisation and the ability of the participants who occupied privileged dominant positions to take action towards change — is reflective of the critical personal engagement with their social context.

If it is possible to take or not to take actions, and if only in the context of interest reformulation is the possibility for change opened up, then the reformulation of interests is a different dynamic for the dominant and the subjugated. The task is then to interrogate how the dominated comes to reformulate

her interests and how the dominant comes to reformulate her interests. I discuss these in turn below. . I then argue that once interests have been reformulated, what is opened up is the possibility for change because the individual is transformed and sees, experiences and understands differently. It is this seeing differently I define as coming to consciousness.

> …Having a good space gave me the ability to then start recognising, oh I can do this stuff. Once I started to realise that, I started to realise something, actually I am not that incapable and that really gave me the sense of just being okay with not having to be the best. Just because you are not the best doesn't mean you are incompetent and I started to see that it wasn't about anything about yourself or your ability to improve your intellectual competence, and that it wasn't that and that time was necessary for that to happen for me and then I was okay. Then I went into the NGO sector and I realised that it was even as bad, like you can, that you know people in the NGO sector are just hypocrites, that they can say you need an equal society whilst not actually operating the same within their own organisations or in relating with community. In fact, one had to learn to stand up for oneself even in the NGO sector. So I began to learn that actually I know something too and people can be very dismissive of educated Black people in South Africa in the civil society space and that is where I have to learn to just take myself really seriously. Then I said actually, hang on, I am educated this does not make sense, surely this should be intellectually problematic. It was then that I started to really feel emboldened to make my own voice makes sense because I could see some of the hypocrisy in the NGO and some of the sort of harm that civil society that was proclaiming human rights was actually doing whilst pretending to do work for Black people …and me realising that I am capable, and I now met a new version of me and said that I cannot just be capable but I can speak my mind with authority (Thandi).

For the oppressed, it is not just the ability to apprehend oneself as a victim of oppression but also the ability to imagine a different world and to imagine oneself being capable of acting to achieve that world that provides the impetus for action. For Thandi it was not just realising the problem and the fact that she was not incapable but becoming emboldened to speak out and make a difference. When Thandi speaks of 'people being dismissive of educated Black people in South Africa', she is acknowledging her position as one of the oppressed. However, she does not just realise that there is nothing wrong with her intellectually but also that she is capable and can speak her mind with authority. The reformulation of interests for the oppressed is the ability to respond to information in such a way that taking action towards the realisation of the imagined world becomes possible. Babbitt (1997) argues that personal experiences can lead to a transformation within, which will lead the individual to apprehend information differently (see also Bartky 1977). This implies that there is a kind of change that occurs that leads the individual to apprehend her context and experiences

differently such that she can see the possibility of changing or bringing about change. This apprehension of information differently enabled Thandi to formulate 'a new version' of herself. It is the question of what brings about this change that thus must be interrogated. Babbitt (1997, 376) has argued that there is a level of transformation implied in the reformulation of interests — that when the individual comes to act in her interests, she undergoes a level of transformation; we cannot say she remains the same and my argument is that this personal transformation is what makes it possible to become an agent of social transformation. Babbitt (1997, 374) further argues that the liberal conception of rational interests does not include the kind of understanding that a person requires to be transformed and that it is precisely this kind of transformation that is needed to understand the ideologies of oppression. In other words, the apprehension of one's interests is not straightforward.

As noted earlier, Sandra Bartky (1977) has argued that there is a distinction between a woman who supports 'women's issues' or fights for 'women's issues' and a feminist. In becoming a feminist, there is a certain kind of awareness that the individual comes to which affects her life and changes her essentially (Bartky 1977). Bartky (1977, 25) writes, 'women have long lamented their condition, but a lament pure and simple need not be an expression of consciousness. As long as their situation is apprehended as natural, inevitable and inescapable, women's consciousness of themselves no matter how alive to insult and inferiority, is not yet feminist consciousness'. For her consciousness only occurs when full or partial liberation is apprehended as a possibility (Bartky 1977, 25). For Thandi, this shift occasioned her engaging more robustly and publicly making her voice heard:

> It was there that I began to really make an alternative voice heard, i.e. the voice of the Black person that is not afraid to say that's a problem and that is when I kind of started to write in media, started to write online, started to engage much more robustly with people about South Africa's democracy and so on (Thandi).

Inga's realisation is not only to do with her perception of her own ability and capability but a realisation that the community members that she works with have resources but may not realise that they possess those resources. Her role then becomes one of conscientising others who are marginalised to apprehend the assets which they possess.

> Overnight you can't have what a developed country has always had and you have to bear in mind that all the wealth in the developed countries did not come based on what resources they had, the wealth has come from somewhere else...and we don't seem to relate to that at all. We just think money is falling out of trees in that country, in no country money falls out of the trees. How do we sort our problems?

> Now that transforms into research and community engagement for me. So, all the projects that I do work on, it is to do with working with the community, not for the community. You have to look at how we come about spaces where people are working with their assets rather than forever telling Oh, we have nothing. It is a matter of pulling the positives into a space that contributes for everybody. If we complain, the glass is half empty. If we synergize, the glass is half full. So, the choice is always up to us what we want to do with our lives (Inga).

In order to become an agent of change, the reformulation of interests has to occur — the agent sees the problems within their context, but goes beyond this to understand and perceive the possibility for change. Thandi's and Inga's realisation enabled them to see things in a different light and provided them with the desire and impetus to take a more active stance. Therefore, it is not just the experience of victimhood or oppression or acknowledging the fact that current structures serve the dominant male and White individual that is sufficient for one to take action towards change. For that to happen one has to transcend this and come to acknowledge and see the possibility for change (Bartky 1977). Thandi's ability to transcend is revealed in her engaging with people within her context and Inga's ability to transcend is evident in being able to 'pull the positives into a space that contributes for everybody' within her context. I argue that what makes this apprehension possible is the reformulation of interests as this enables the individual to see and understand information which everyone has access to — differently.

Just as it is possible for the oppressed to do nothing about their oppression, for the dominant person who enjoys a position of comfort, it is also possible to act or not to take action towards transformation. It stands to reason that those who experience the structures, cultures and practices as enabling will want to preserve the way things are, will want to reproduce or maintain the system (Archer 1995). If this is the case, then how do we explain an individual who occupies a dominant position but takes actions aimed at transformation? My argument here is that for the one who occupies a dominant position, it is acknowledging the victimhood of the others, understanding what one's role is in such oppression and envisioning the possibility for change that enables the reformulation of the interests of the dominant subject. It is the ability to see one's role in perpetuating such victimisation and this comes from being politically and socially engaged in the experiences of others within one's context. Such experiences result in giving the person a new set of lenses such that certain blind spots are eliminated and the person is then in a new position of being able to see what was previously unseen. Citing bell hooks, Babbitt argues that hooks's statement that 'it is often difficult for White liberals to acknowledge that there are perspectives they cannot have access to' does not mean that it is

impossible for Whites to have an understanding of racist oppression (Babbitt 1997, 377) — or for men to understand the effects of sexism — but that 'there are some things that cannot be understood by Whites in advance of somewhat radical change to the social structures and power relations that define the way people see themselves' (Babbitt 1997, 377). I want to add that this understanding, apart from depending on a radical change in the structures and power relations, also depends on a radical change in the way the individual perceives things or sees things. As Babbitt (1997, 377) notes it means reformulating interests requires personal change, which then allows the individual to understand the need for change. This personal change requires giving up power and an actual change of behaviour and commitment (Babbitt 1997, 377). It is this sort of change that I refer to when I speak of participants' reformulation of their interests. What is enabled by this change is the critical engagement with one's context and one's personal relation to that context. Once interest is reformulated, then it is possible to conceive giving up power and changing one's behavior. In Dana's case her eye-opening experience came from being in close contact with a Black female colleague whom she was responsible for mentoring:

> I think what has been quite sobering for me is I have been mentoring a development lecturer since last year and she is a young Black female and it has become very evident through understanding her experiences within the University how difficult it is, how violent it is for her, how violating it is for her. She was very depressed because of how she was defined by her blackness, how she would represent blackness. I wouldn't consider anyone I work with conservative, yet when we brought this up at the staff meeting, it is just quite appalling to me how defensive some of my colleagues were about what she was saying. My one colleague gets up and says, can you give me an example, I just thought how dare you demand that of someone's lived everyday experience, that you need evidence in order to listen and hear and just sit with it for a while. That was all that was being asked, not to provide solutions, but to hear what it is like to be young Black and female. And you know it was, it was quite an eye-opener for me within that environment as well about how violent it could be (Dana).

The point of having such opportunities for engagement is not just that they provide information that can be used to acknowledge the problem but the implication this has for the actor's understanding and behaviour and relations with others within that social system (Babbitt 1997, 377). Babbitt, drawing on bell hooks, argues that, 'it is not possible for the relatively non-oppressed to acquire adequate understanding of racism simply by reading and listening to what people of colour have to say, unless that reading or listening is of an emotionally and politically engaged sort' (Babbitt 1997, 377). She further notes that understanding requires undergoing some kind of transformation

experience, particularly of the sort that results in the unsettling of the person's self and positions (Babbitt 1997, 377). Taking action to change pervasive structures, then, implies emotional and political engagement. In the present study, what is revealed is the engagement and involvement of the participants. Because of her experience of mentoring, Dana is able to understand: she is able to see and know through understanding the experiences of her colleague in a historically white university where for example being the 'token' Black can be violating and the responsibility is on that individual to not only represent blackness but to also embody such blackness quietly. Critical engagement enables the individual to see beyond her own experiences and Dana is able to see or realise the problem with the context through engaging with the experiences of the other in a way that her colleagues remain blind to. Frazier (2013, 364) calls for the interrogation and deconstruction of those ideologies, discourses, practices and ways of being that normalise the violence of marginalised groups. For Dana seeing the reaction of others who embody the same position as her was an eye opener as to the level of subtle discrimination and exclusion that colour the experience of many Black individuals in universities. Bonilla-Silva, Goar and Embrick (2006) refer to this as 'White habitus' that prevents the development of meaningful relationships between Blacks and Whites. Some people choose not to acknowledge the experience of the other by denying its existence or limiting them to individual instances or examples as opposed to recognising that racism constitutes a pervasive structure or social ordering system[16]. This reduction of racism to specific experiences of racism or events of racism is a minimizing strategy and enables the speaker to distance themselves from racism because they are not themselves implicated in these specific examples.

A common strategy of whiteness is denial or the attempt to reduce the experiences of racism or events of racism to numbers or singular events. This strategy of denial prevents the individual from seeing acknowledging that there is a problem with the system that needs to be fixed. As Bonilla-Silva, Goar and Embrick (2006, 248) note there is a tendency among Whites to explain away discrimination by saying things like 'race has got nothing to do with it or that is just the way things are'. This is indeed the very opposite of what Barkty (1977) says is necessary for conscientisation and transformation, namely that one does not accept the inevitability of 'the way things are' but rather sees that a different way is possible and therefore should be striven for. Jean Paul Sartre (1984, 435) also highlights the link between apprehending an alternative situation and action, he argues that unless the individual is able to 'conceive of a social state in which these sufferings would not exist' — s/he does not act'.

[16]What is significant about such a response is that different white people, encountering such stories, react differently. Some of the participants in the pilot study for example, tried to minimise this reality.

Explaining things as normal thus closes the possibility of transforming them. The denial allows for the maintenance of the way things are and the reproduction of existing cultures, structures, practices and ways of being that allow for exclusion and marginalisation. Also the attempt to reduce an issue that affects many Blacks in almost every institution by asking for examples, can be described as a way of silencing Blacks. Asking for an example or attempting to reduce such experiences to singular moments is like saying, 'ok you have been included, you must now shut up and be happy to have been included at all and if you feel excluded it is only probably a few times'. Underlying such requests for examples is the implicit assumption that her presence is evidence of the nonexistence of such violence and as a denial of the systemic nature of the problem (see Ahmed 2007, 164). Such questions minimise the significance of the speaker's experience and in doing so reinforce and reproduce the system.

This reveals a problem that confronts many higher education institutions in South Africa today. Firstly the focus on numbers (whether it is on reducing stories to specific examples or numbers in terms of the inclusion of Blacks and women in the institution) shifts the focus of the university to bringing in more Black bodies while ignoring how the power relations within such institutions continue to exclude and marginalise the very people who are brought in by various programmes aimed at equity and redress. While the strong focus on numbers is important (see for instance Akooje and Nkomo 2009), higher education needs to play a role in ensuring that the power relations, its culture, structures and way of being do not further marginalise previously marginalised groups who are now in the university (see for instance Howell and Lazarus 2003, 61). A number of studies have noted the importance of the shift from numbers to the experiences of marginalised groups once they have gained access to these institutions (see Machingambi 2011; Boughey 2003; Shackleton, Riordan and Simonies 2006; Fourie 1999; Jansen 2004, 301; Bitzer 2010).

As Kathy notes, to reformulate one's interests means one is aware of one's position in relation to structural relations.

> I am well aware that at times that my whiteness is a hindrance with other people and sometimes it is very enabling, sometimes the fact that I am woman is a hindrance, sometimes it is enabling, it is just infused and everything, if one becomes conscious to these things, it is part of every moment of every day. But this is how you live with it and particularly around your whiteness because of the power stuff that comes with it. When my whiteness becomes an issue I tend to step back and rather, part of what one is socialized into doing is that when one is questioned in

> any way or challenged in any way then you push back because you can, because you're White, because you have the power and that is who you are and so that part of my life is often a lot like that appointment where the Black woman got the job, I decided to step back and offer my support rather than saying this is not fair…I see my identity as being both as an obstacle and enabling factor, it has taught me the importance of listening (Kathy).

As noted above, as individuals, we do not choose/determine the kind of societies, class, race, gender and sexuality we are born into and these structures in a way both constrain and enable us (New 1994, 188; Sewell; 1992). To apprehend information differently is to acknowledge one's position and the enablements and constraints that it provides. Understanding this position of privilege helps determine one's course of action. Seeing from this position and becoming aware enables and 'opens up new scope for choices that were unavailable to them before the emergence of this awareness' (Maitra 2013, 361; Bartky 1977, 27). Because Kathy is aware of her position and the constraining and enabling elements and understands the power accorded her by her race, she can 'take a step back' rather than being forceful. In her narrative, Kathy's realisation and acknowledgment of her position, reflect or can be described as a reformulation of interests as she is able to respond by offering her support. So rather than pushing herself or asserting herself because of the power with which her whiteness endows her, she is able to offer a supportive role. Being aware of one's privilege and power especially in a historically white university means that rather than using your power to your advantage, you eschew such power and choose to play a different role. This is in itself a form of exercising agency. Therefore to reformulate one's interests is to be aware of the power one has within a context but making the choice not to use such power to one's advantage. In essence agency implies a decision to shift from a position of power to powerlessness and this is depending on the individual's position within the relations of power. Being aware of one's privilege points to individuals reformulating their interests because they become aware of their position and the roles they occupy, their implications within that context and thus they are able to position themselves differently and make decisions about subsequent action which is what Kathy and Dana did. It is being able to acknowledge and be aware of her privilege that influences Kathy's subsequent action to refuse her power by stepping back, offering her support and understanding the importance of listening. So for Kathy being aware of her race and gender enables her to position herself differently and understand how to respond to constraining and enabling structures.

In this section I have argued that taking action towards changing those structures that perpetuate marginalisation even as new entrants are purportedly welcomed into the institution, requires of actors

critical engagement with their social context and an understanding of their interests as lying with transformation of the system rather than its preservation. Once the reformulation of interests occurs, it opens up the possibility for change — for the individual to apprehend information differently; to apprehend the possibility of change; for the shutters to be removed from one's blind spots; for the problems to be seen and a different context imagined. In the following section I go on to discuss the way in which apprehending information differently opens up the possibility of positioning oneself differently.

5.5 Alternative Positioning

> I think progressive White people with deep social commitments can bring about those changes also, or lead those kind of changes. So, I don't really think ultimately it's an issue of Black and White. It is a question of how prepared you are to embrace change, and how prepared you are to be an agent of change, [but] issues of Black and White do come in (Max).

While I discuss the ways in which individuals have engaged in detail in the third chapter, I argue here that for both the oppressed/subjugated and the dominant/oppressor, there is a level of personal transformation that enables the individual to become an agent of change. As Max notes change can be brought about by a deep social commitment even though the individual occupies a dominant role or position. This means that transformation does not necessarily have to be engendered by those who occupy a subordinate position or experience the structures as constraining. It can also be engendered by those who occupy a dominant position or experience the structures as enabling. This I argue is possible if the individual has a deep social commitment to changing her context. Archer (1995) argues that those who occupy dominant positions will most likely want to maintain the social structure and relations. That is there are people who occupy dominant positions or roles who are 'unprogressive' — to draw on Max's term — and will want to maintain social relations. Max contends, however, that there is the possibility for the dominant to be an agent of transformation rather than reproduction. However as Max notes being progressive minded is not enough. This has to be complemented with a deep social commitment to engendering change -- what I call critical personal engagement. The implication of this is that while one's position — for instance one's race, class and gender — does play a role in determining the individual's interest in reproduction or transformation, such positions do not unconditionally confine the individual to their 'interests'. There is a possibility for an alternative choice or repositioning of what one understands to be in one's interests. This is where I argue agency comes in: that is, the ability of the individual to choose an alternative position or

interpretation of their interests. I argue that not being necessarily confined by the interests that one's position confers, is made possible by a deep social commitment or as I put it, critical personal engagement. Thus, implied in the reformulation of interests or the repositioning of oneself, is the individual's critical personal engagement with her context.

I draw on Babbitt's (1997) argument that transformation is dependent on personal and political experiences. I argue that what is implied in the taking of action is a transformation in the sense of the self. Babbitt (1997, 373) argues that it may be the case that sometimes the 'disruption of a person's secure sense of self is just what is required' to enable the individual to make rational choices or, as is the case here, to take action towards transformation. To say that a Black person experiences the reformulation of interests differently to a White person is true — and there is a difference between the consciousness that is an apprehension of victimhood and the kind of consciousness that transcends this apprehension of victimhood where the individual is able to not just imagine what ought to be but also the possibilities for the actualisation or realisation of what ought to be. There is however a similarity here: to come to this kind of consciousness involves a reformulation of their interests because as Babbitt notes, it may be possible for the oppressed to, in the light of being aware of one's victimisation, still choose not to change or for the oppressor, in the light of new information, to choose to reproduce oppressive structures. The point of the decision to change such a situation of servitude implies a transformation in the self or the self image of the individual. Put in context, the point of taking action for the Black person implies a reformulation of interests such that compliance or benefitting from the system as it is come to be rejected as possible choices. It is perhaps important to note here that not only those who occupy dominant positions have blind spots. Those who occupy the position of the oppressed also have bind spots. For example a Black female who comes from a rich family may argue for the right to own a skirt worth R30 00 or a Black man may argue for women not taking up leadership positions or these two individuals may have difficulty seeing the pain of homosexuals or the disabled for example. This is why I noted earlier on that our positions within specific contexts confer these blind spots on us, where we do not see beyond our own experiences. The transformation or repositioning of oneself is the ability to see beyond the particularity of one's own experience. The progressive person whether Black or White -- is one who can see beyond their self-interests and become aware of the suffering of others and implied in this is a reformulation of interests.

Babbitt (1997, 374) however argues that there might be other social conditioning that may prevent the individual from acting. There are many reasons why the individual may decide not to act towards changing their oppressive contexts or take action aimed at transformation — maybe it is to maintain the existing structures, other social conditions may not allow for this change or the individual may not be able to cope with such changes (Babbitt 1997, 376). It may also be the case that that individual is unable to cope with the consequences of pursuing her interests (Babbitt 1997, 374). My argument here is that implied in taking action for change is the reformulation of interests and this may be a requirement for action for both the dominant and the dominated. I argue that the reformulation of interests implies critical engagement with one's social context. So that if this is the case then it is a possibility for the dominant to take action to become an agent of transformation or the dominated to take action and for both not to take action. Thandi understands her decision to act in ways that go beyond her narrow self-interests — in short to be an agent for transformation — as resting on a deep commitment to change which requires supporting those who feel marginalised and discriminated against.

> I just have an outlook where I see young people and I make it my job because I am in a public institution, that is my job — we are not here for selfish motives, we are not here to just take care of ourselves, we are here to take care of the intellectual life of our society and to produce knowledge that will further the minds of not just our society but of the world. But people come here and are comfortable, buy themselves big cars, they are happy so that is the situation. For example something that is a lot of work is informal mentoring and informal peer support, so me supporting a colleague whose White colleagues are just belittling her, people who are supporting postgrad students informally because they need someone to talk to because they can't deal with, maybe they are in science, those things happen all the time because people need somebody to make them feel like they are not crazy (Thandi).

When Thandi notes that she 'makes it her job' to help others informally she highlights a significant element of transformation, where effecting change is not forced on the individual but chosen — she makes a choice to take on that responsibility, to position herself differently. She alludes also to how assimilation can be an alluring prospect, offering its own material comforts even to the marginalised. Thandi takes it upon herself to do the extra work that is required to mentor and support students and colleagues who may be marginalised by the institution. Thandi's personal engagement with her context enables her to see, know, apprehend information differently, reposition herself and take action rather than simply being 'happy' with the comforts on offer. She sees the way in which the social relations within the university exclude some students and colleagues and makes the choice to do

something about it. While her race and gender may constrain her ability to put an end to such forms of oppression, they also enable her to understand that something can be done by engaging and providing support for those that may be excluded by the culture of the university. Beyond highlighting how exclusionary university cultures are to some, Thandi also points to the role academics can play in deploying their agency and making the environment and culture more conducive for those who are marginalised. Echoing Max's point that while one's structural positioning does play a role in determining how one perceives one's interests, that positioning does not confine the individual to specific roles or predetermine the actions of the individual. While for Thandi, being Black and female does have its constraints in a culture characterised by the dominance of whiteness, it also enabled her to realise that those who are excluded need people to make them feel included. Thus, one's agency goes beyond the confines of one's position, and being able to critically evaluate one's context also has implications for the capacity for action. As Inga pointed out, becoming an agent of change is something which starts in the heart and mind of the individual:

> The word activism especially in this context, in this country, sounds like taking up arms and going and saying 'we want something'. That is not activism for me. Activism is what happens in your head and heart to say, how do I change this for the betterment of the rest of the people who don't have the voice and are not in a space and have never had that social capital to think of OK, what are we lacking and how can we make it happen within the constraints of our situation (Inga).

For Inga, to critically engage, is to question one's roles within one's context and to thus get to a point where, as she puts it, one feels the need to ask 'how do I change and help the oppressed and excluded' despite as she notes, the constraints that may exist. Parkins' (2000) work on feminist agency highlights the intertwined nature of bodies and contexts and the potential for action. She writes, 'bodies inhabit specific social, historical and discursive contexts which shape our corporeal experiences and our opportunities for political contestation' (Parkins 2000, 59; see also Maitra 2013, 360; Bandura 1989; 1175; De Jaegher and Froese 2009, 444). While acknowledging her constraining conditions, Inga highlights the role that critical personal engagement plays in being/becoming an agent of change. Thus to engage, as Inga notes, is to involve one's body, mind and heart. It also highlights my argument that even though one occupies a subordinating position, it is possible to become an agent of change and for that to happen, a shift has to occur in the individual's understanding.

For Chris being critically engaged means understanding his position in relation to the context and choosing to support change. As Chris's narrative highlights, even those who occupy a dominant position can also be agents of change.

> What I mean is I am the person with a soap box, the champion for a particular cause, sort of racism, I think I am helping perpetuate racism as much as I might be helping to transform, to change things as well. So a lot of the articles that I write, for example, I can write, I can put ideas together, that is what I am good at, I co-author and typically if it is going to be about some issue on Township life, I am going to make sure that I am co-authoring it with somebody who has experience. So I am there but I am not, it is not just my voice. So yes I guess I am specially empowered but again I have to be very careful that I am not the one calling the shots, calling all the shots, I should be primarily working in the background I think, helping others to lead transformation (Chris).

Chris recognises his power or the power conferred on him by his position as well as the danger of his potential interest in maintaining the social relations that benefit him as a White man. While he notes the possibility of him reproducing dominant and oppressive structures given his race, he also notes the possibility of engendering transformation. His engagement with the context informs his decision to work in the background and help others to lead the transformation process. Thus, like Thandi and Inga, Chris highlights the role played by personal engagement in one's context in having agency to effect change. To be critically engaged is then to make changing the society your job; it is to involve one's body and mind in the transformation project and be ethically responsible and responsive to your context. Thus agency or having agency to effect change is not just revealed in action but also in the motivation for action. Before the material aspect of acting can occur, there has to be a transformation of the individual and this transformation occurs through critical personal reconsideration of the context. Raino (2008, 116) argues that 'agency cannot be enacted automatically and neither can it be considered a stable property or an attitude of an individual — rather, it must be understood as a complex and contradictory process developed over time but simultaneously grounded in local interactions, depending on the roles and positions available to individuals'. If agency cannot be enacted automatically but is developed over time through interactions within specific contexts, the process through which an individual comes to 'reformulate' their interests as the condition for the individual to take action that may be considered transformatory, involves an interplay between structural properties and personal/agential properties. It furthermore, takes time and is a result of constant on-going interactions and relations within a specific context.

Babbitt (1997, 374) argues that as a result of such interaction or personal and political engagement, the individual's interests do not just become reformulated; there is also a form of 'personal change' which enables the individual to 'possess a different interpretive background on the basis of which to weigh her desires and interests' and experiences. What is implied in such political engagement is not just a reformulation of interests but a shift in the background on which the individual bases what is in his or her real interests. Reformulating interests thus implies a change in one's understanding, it enables consciousness -- because information is apprehended differently (Babbitt 1997, 374) -- and alternative positioning. As noted above, what enables the reformulation of interests is personal engagement with the structures and cultures within ones context and interacting with people within that context, the consequence of which is consciousness. It is because they are able to reformulate their interests that they are able to apprehend the information they receive differently. They thus become conscious of the implications of their experiences and see the possibility for acting towards transforming their context. Babbitt (1997, 380) argues that sometimes, certain actions need to be taken to create conditions where one can apprehend information in a way that enables change. Thus the reformulation of interests allows/enables the individual to come to consciousness, to apprehend the information and the experiences s/he receives in such a way that she comes to consciousness and sees the possibility for change. Reformulating interests enables the information to be processed in a way that allows for consciousness and actions that enable change. This probably also explains why such information does not yield similar results for all people. I argue that the reformulation of interests enables the information to affect the individual and the way s/he interprets experiences. It affects the individual in such a way that enables her to become conscious and apprehend the possibility for change. This transformation is reflected in the ability of an individual to become a knower and consequently explains why both the oppressed and dominant are capable of making this move to consciousness. Babbitt argues against the ascription of issues about autonomous action to an individuals' psychological state, as she notes, there is an element of the social and political implied in this (Babbitt 1997, 381).

Alex argued for the importance of listening and exposing himself to different arguments which enabled him to position himself differently, to understand the need for change and to support change. To be critically engaged is also to listen and understand -- when you listen you come to understand and this guides the individual's subsequent actions, as Alex notes:

> I make it a point to try and expose myself to the full cross-section of the University. So what has put me in a position to support the change? I think it is exposing myself

> to essentially what is going on at the University and the way other people think and then obviously being in a position of power, well it is not power, being in a position in which I can provide leadership. I have just learned a lot myself. So just broadly and that means that in my position, I have been able to, if I hadn't been on the language committee, I wouldn't have heard the arguments around why we need trilingual signage on campus, well I listened to them and I accepted them completely. So I promote change and transformation not because it is a path that the University is on that I don't understand, I promote it because it is a path that I completely understand (Alex).

Babbitt (1997, 377) argues that simply reading or listening does not enable an adequate understanding of the experiences of the oppressed and to come to such understanding, the process of listening has to be one of emotional and political engagement. As Alex's narrative reveals, to reformulate one's interests is to move beyond listening to engaging both emotionally and politically. He does this by exposing himself to different experiences, discourses and arguments that exist within his context, rather than sticking to his own comfort zone and refusing to see or acknowledge other ideas, positions and ways of being. For Alex coming to act came not just from attending committee meetings, listening, learning from the different perspectives and then understanding, but also from 'accepting completely' the need for change.

Coming back to my earlier question -- what makes an individual take actions that engender transformation, Archer (1995), Bhaskar (1998), Giddens (1977), Callinicos (2004) as well as other scholars have argued that 'interests' play a major role in individuals taking actions. Archer for instance argues that interests shape the pressure for transformation or reproduction of certain structures (Archer 1995, 152). The process of critical engagement enables the reformulation of one's interests in the light of one's knowledge — a process Chris describes as 'messy' and Max describes as a 'painful business'. It is painful because the implication is that when one acts against one's (inherited/vested) interests by reformulating given a new situational context, there is also a shift in the causal effects of structures. When there is a shift in personal properties, there is also a shift in the structural properties of what becomes constraining and enabling. As Natalie noted, a shift in her understanding of what was in her interest meant a shift in her experience of the context which became limiting or constraining rather than enabling. Because she had reformulated her interests so that they were no longer aligned with the dominant interests, she came to feel more constrained by her whiteness.

> So and no matter what I am teaching about, no matter what texts I am prescribing, my very presence is kind of alienating. So sometimes, that is what I mean, so if you just gave my course to someone who came from that kind of background and he walked into the classroom and he could teach about anything, I think that would sometimes make a bigger effect and that is quite depressing for me because I can change my teaching, I can change my research, I can change all those things but, obviously I can't become a working class man, that is out of my ability. So sometimes one realises there are things I can do, but there are also things that I can't do that other people need to do and that is important but that might mean that I need to resign or get a job in some other space or just play more of a background role and just try to encourage the university to employ more people who are of other backgrounds and maybe not take up a leadership role in the institution in the future but rather say no I am not going to be a leader because we need not to see more people like me in leadership positions (Natalie).

Kathy similarly described her (White) identity as both an obstacle and an enabling factor:

> I see my identity as being both as an obstacle and enabling factor, it has taught me the importance of listening and not as human that I always have the right to speak (Kathy).

Archer (1995) has argued that the situation into which we are born (race, class, gender) conditions our actions and experiences by providing both enabling and constraining conditions depending on the context. The current structures in the higher education system were set up to serve and preserve White domination, especially the domination of White men (Mabokela 2000, 98). It might be expected that an individual will want to preserve any situation that benefits him or her. As Archer (1995, 90) notes, those who experience the conditions as enabling will likely seek to reproduce such structures and those experiencing the conditions as constraining will likely seek to transform such structures.

However the data in the present study showed that individuals are capable of taking actions that may be against their interests. Hay (2002, 131) and Jessop (1996, 124) have argued that when individuals reflect upon their actions and experiences in specific contexts, they are capable of modifying their interests to fit their new beliefs. That is, agents are capable of reformulating what they perceive to be in their interests by reflecting on their relations and interactions (structural and cultural) with the context. Even though some participants experienced the current structures in higher education to be enabling, the participants for the most part were engaged in action that if successful will ensure that these structures become constraining for them — become less privileging for them than what they

are at present. While this may be read as acting against their interests, the reformulation of their interests led to their desire to act to facilitate transformation of the very structures that privilege them.

A shift in how one understands one's interests thus in turn entails a shift in how agents are constrained and enabled by structural and cultural properties. Natalie, for instance, spoke about how the reformulation of her interests led to the feeling of alienation and experiencing the context as depressing. Her desire to act and have a certain impact with her teaching is made more difficult when speaking from the position of her White body — thus while whiteness is perceived in an overall sense as enabling in a racially structured environment, for her it comes to be experienced as a constraint given the kind of action which she wishes to take.

Critical engagement with context enabled the reformulation of interests, apprehension of the possibility of change and subsequent action taken to engender change. If interest are now reformulated or aligned to one what wants to transform, then it makes sense that agents would want to take actions that align with their interests (i.e. actions that effect change). The capacity to reformulate interests enables an apprehension of information differently and involves a kind of knowledge, awareness, empathy, understanding — a consciousness of how things are and how we want them to be (see Maitra 2013, 361; Hirschmann 1998, 361). Natalie knows the context, she understands the implications and repercussions of acting to effect change, but still wants to engage in such actions, to change the context because she has come to a conviction about how things should be. In this way, through the reformulation of her interests she no longer acts to preserve the interests of whiteness but to effect a more just dispensation with which she would feel more ethically at ease. But she also experiences the pain of not being able to be fully agential in the pursuit of her reformulated interests in being an agent for social justice. Her whiteness now acts as a constraint in a context where it would have otherwise been enabling.

To be an agent of transformation is then to reformulate one's interests and this enables a shift in one's interpretive lens, and it is this that opens up the possibility for an alternative positioning which then opens up the possibility for change. This points to the importance of reflexivity to critical engagement -- implied in the individual critically engaging and then reformulating interests is a critical reflection of their experiences within their context.

5.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is described as 'the process mediating the effect of our circumstances upon our actions' (Archer 2012, 6; 2007, 4). Just as structures and cultures condition action by creating enabling and limiting conditions for action, so also does reflexivity condition the actions of the participants — whether to act to reproduce or transform the cultural and structural conditions of their contexts. Archer (2012, 6) argues that 'where reflexivity is concerned, the key process through which societal reproduction/morphostasis or transformation/morphogenesis influence the subjectivity of the populations in question, is identical to the way in which any structural or cultural property exerts an influence on the human subjects, even if it is not perceived to do so' (Archer 2012, 6).

> As I said before when I was working with my colleagues I was the leader in that group, those colleagues didn't come voluntarily to that course they were told by the head of department that you must now go and work with James. I think it is about acknowledging that. Apart from that I have to say I struggle to effect changes in a classroom…there are certain things that I do around drafting assignments formatively back…writing skills of students from certain backgrounds are weaker because of educational role. Again it is perceived as a deficit model, I struggle with that because those students often have stories, if I ask them to write 300 word stories based on their experience they often have stronger stories to tell. What assignments do you set, what is the grading of those assignments? Is it grammar or narrativity, the importance of the story etc. Those things are in my head and again as I said it my practice, I have to try and acknowledge diversity, as I said I am interested in theories about those communities. When you do the practice, you have to reflect back on that practice using the theoretical framework that you set up for the course, then real learning starts to happen -- you actually start building your own knowledge and confidence as a researcher (James).

McNay (2000, 5) notes that reflexivity can be understood as the awareness that arises from a self-conscious relation with the other. Jessop (1996, 124) argues 'agents are reflexive and possess the capacity to reformulate amid enabling and constraining conditions their identity and interests and are able to engage in strategic calculation about their context' (Jessop 1996, 124). James' acknowledgment of diversity reflects the process of internal conversation that results from questioning one's interaction with one's context. In South Africa, diversity (race, class, gender and sexuality) brings its own sets of challenges to universities within this context (Cross 2004, 387). Literature on transformation in South Africa notes that in addition to providing access and participation, transformation will have to involve a reconstruction of the system to fit the experiences of marginalised groups and not trying to fit marginalised groups into the system (see Howell and

Lazarus 2003, 16). This means that academics within the university have to be aware that providing access to those previously excluded will also mean ensuring that the university's ways of doing things are restructured in such a way that they fit with the experiences and ways of knowing of a diverse group of students, which is what Natalie and James have tried to do. Their recognition of the need to acknowledge diversity in their modes of teaching points to reflexivity. In reflecting on their past or immediate experience agents are able to determine their course of action.

Krause (2011, 310) argues that the capacity to stand in reflexive relation to oneself seems to be at the heart of the distinction between an agent and a mere cause as it makes it possible for human beings to be responsive to norms in ways that an inanimate object cannot be (see also Archer 2007, 2; Rosenberg 1990, 3). Reformulating one's interests reveals the reflexivity of agents who take action to transform and such reflexivity allows the participants to respond to norms, discourses, practices and structures within the context (Krause 2011, 310) by taking actions aimed at transforming them. Archer (2007, 16) argues that this is possible 'because subjects can exercise their reflexive powers in different ways, according to their very different concerns and considerations'. For John, his concern is how to ensure inclusivity which was brought on by his questioning of the incongruence between the context and the 'narrow minded' individuals within the context.

> But being always aware it is a juggling act between social engineering and arrogance. I mean one of the questions we have to ask is, how do we transform what we do here? What I am telling you is about how I can mentor people into this system, I am not talking to you about how I changed the system and that is a huge frustration for me. I came from the a narrow minded department, the worst type of conservative, into a university where I thought wow I am going to come to this magically liberal, enabling environment and I stumbled into the most narrow-minded academics you can ever imagine who really should be at Oxford or Cambridge or somewhere and not in a University in a rural Eastern Cape village. So it has been easier for me to look at how we try and offer opportunities and how we try and bring people into here rather than how we change this (John).

His reflection and understanding of the context led to his conception of change as mentoring people into the system. Archer writes, 'our internal conversations define what course of actions we take in given situations' and such responses vary from evasion, through compliance to strategic manipulation or subversion' (Archer 2012, 6; see also Archer 2007, 2, 15, 65). So, while Natalie and James's response was the acknowledgment of diversity in their teaching methods, for John it meant 'mentoring people into the system' — that is to say, providing people with the means to survive

within the existing structures because his reflection led to the conclusion that this would be the more viable route given the circumstances. When we reflect on our experiences and interactions within specific contexts we are able to determine what course of action would best suit us and these actions are not identical for all in any given context or institution. As Archer (2012, 6) argues, not all actors who are similarly placed respond in the same way.

The current situational context in which academics who are agents of transformation find themselves is a novel one, one in which there is no script to read off of or guidelines about how to behave (see Archer 2012, 6). Given this, agents who find themselves in these circumstances have to channel new paths for negotiating this context (see Archer 2012) — whether they choose to act in ways that reproduce or change the structural and cultural relations within such contexts. Taking action that enables transformation, implies a capacity for, and willingness to undertake, a process of reflection on one's relationships and interactions and positions within such a context (see Archer 2007, 145; Krause 2011, 304). In the present study, participants' critical personal engagement was a necessary condition for deciding on a course of action that would enable transformation. As Alex commented, this process may not necessarily be deliberately chosen but may be the result of understanding which in turn leads to to changing one's way of behaving:

> I am not sure I ever had the goal of trying to better understand the diversity of campus but the end result of that was that I moved away from being a very focused academic teaching and doing research to someone who I think had a better understanding of what was going on, on campus (Alex)

Giddens writes of the relationship between reflection, the reformulation of interests and transformative action that 'it is the specifically reflexive form of knowledgeability of human agents that is most deeply involved in the recursive ordering of social practices' (Giddens 1984, 3). Giddens (1984, 3) argues that reflexivity should be conceptualised not as mere 'self-consciousness' but also as the monitored character of the on-going flow of life (see also Rosenberg 1990). In this study the participants emerge as agents engaged in on-going self-reflection and internal conversations about their daily interactions with other individuals and structures/cultures within their contexts (see Archer 2012). What we see in the data is an on-going process of questioning, leading to participants realising how they are positioned, reflecting on their personal experiences of injustice, understanding the need for transformation and having the ability to empathise with others whose experiences they may not share. If agency implies the formulation of choice and not just making choices as Maitra (2013, 360) and Hirshmann (1998, 361) argue, then reformulating interests is a process in which structural and

personal properties enable the formation of the choice to act towards transformation (see also Takhar 2011, 343). The individual's ability to reflect on their experiences and interactions, as well as the experiences and interactions themselves, is what is entailed in the process of coming to consciousness — and this is the basis for subsequent action.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for the reformulation of interests as a condition for coming to consciousness which in turn enables the individual to take action towards transformation. I argued that while it is possible for a White person enjoying comfortability to want to change or transform the system, it is also possible for a Black person to be a victim of oppression and still do nothing about it. The implication of this is that for the Black person and for the White person who does take action towards transformation, there is a level of reformulation of interests that enables them to take such action towards transformation. Though I admit that there is a reformulation of interests implied in taking action towards change or transformation, for the White and Black person, reformulation of interests may mean something different as I noted above. However, what is significant is that what enables the reformulation of interests is the critical engagement of the individuals. This transformation occurs because the individuals are able to envision a possibility for change from what is to what ought to be. First of all, they recognise the problems with the system; second they realise that this is not what ought to be and third -- which is the most crucial in enabling a reformulation of interests -- is to acknowledge and see the possibility for achieving or realising what ought to be. Once an individual comes to this point, then they are able to take actions towards change.

The idea of reformulating interests points to reflexivity of the agent where they are able to reflect on their present and past experiences in relation to their position and interaction with the other within the social system. This kind of reflexivity enables individuals to realise the problems within that context and then want to do something about it. I argue that the reformulation of interests and reflexivity enables the individual to come to consciousness. For instance, acknowledging privilege, understanding the need for change, personal experiences of strangeness etc. are all examples of what happens in an individual who has come to consciousness.

Finally, taking action towards changing these structures that perpetuate marginalisation even as new entrants are purportedly welcomed into the institution requires of actors critical engagement with their social context and an understanding of their interests as lying with transformation of the system

rather than its preservation. Once the reformulation of interests occurs, it opens up the possibility for change — for the individual to apprehend information differently; to apprehend the possibility of change; for the shutters to be removed from one's blind spots and for the problems to be seen and a different context imagined.

6 Chapter
Coming to consciousness

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that reflection and the reformulation of interests enables the individual to shift the interpretive background against which s/he judges his or her experiences and it is this that brings about the consciousness that is the precondition for an individual becoming an agent of change. I also argued, citing Bartky (1977) and Sartre (1984), that taking action towards transformation cannot occur outside a recognition of an 'objective lack' in the current social situation. That is, a recognition that there is a problem (i.e. oppression and injustice) with that context and seeing the possibilities for change. I define this recognition of the problem within one's context and possibilities for transformation as coming to consciousness. McNay (2003 140; 2000, 4) has argued that a more precise and varied account of agency is required to explain the different motivations and ways in which individuals and groups struggle to transform institutions. This chapter, in line with the first section of McNay's argument, gives an account of the participants' motivation to take action towards transformation, while the next chapter examines the ways in which these individuals struggle to transform what has been described as a rigid, but also at times, enabling structure. I argue that for these participants or agents of change 'coming to consciousness' was an important motivation explaining why they subsequently wanted to be involved with taking actions that effected change in the university. It must be however noted that there may be a coming to consciousness of different things leading to different actions. For instance, an individual may become conscious of the fact that the imperative to transform poses a threat to her position within the institution and may as a result choose to use her power to ensure things remain the same. In the same vein an individual may come to consciousness of the injustice and problems with her context and choose to take action to transform such a context. My point is that agency could just as well be reactionary as progressive and I discuss this in detail in the next chapter. The focus of the present chapter is however on individuals who have come to recognise the objective lack within their contexts and to reformulate their interests against the backdrop of this realisation.

Furthermore, I argue that the participants' understanding of transformation and their ability to realise the importance of transformation were critical in their decision to take action towards transformation.

For these agents, the process of questioning, acknowledging privilege and reflecting on their experiences is an important part of understanding the need for change and subsequently taking action. Being 'conscious' hence is a necessary condition for being able to identify the discourses, practices and ways of being that allow for the marginalisation of the other. Recognising the embeddedness of such discourses, norms and ways of being, provided a motivation for the individual to find ways and take action aimed at rejecting and changing dominant cultures and structures. If we are to respond to the imperative to transform the higher education sector, then a place to start would be seeing beyond our own experiences, our immediate context and recognising our blind spots. In this way, we can really engage with the structural, cultural and ideological practices that ensure the marginalisation and oppression of the 'other'.

If the reformulation of interests enables one to come to consciousness, what then does it mean to come to consciousness? Wright (1985, 242 in Callinicos 2004, 157) defines consciousness as the 'elements of a person's subjectivity which are discursively accessible to the person'. Following Wright's definition, I describe coming to consciousness not as a liberation from unconsciousness but as a process which involves the recognition of our blind spots and which creates the possibility for action. I argue that consciousness enables the individual to engage in actions that may be of a reproductive or transformative nature. Consciousness as it is referred to here is defined by Giddens (1984, 44) as a situation in which 'people pay attention to the events going on around them in such a way as it relates to their activity in those events'. It is the reflexive monitoring of conduct which he terms 'practical consciousness' Giddens (1984, 44). Consciousness can be seen as a recognition of those aspects of our context that we may be unaware of. The narratives of the participants in this study reveal that the individual 'coming to consciousness or coming to see' enables him/her to take actions towards change. It must however be noted that consciousness need not be directed at transformation, such consciousness may also lead to the reproduction of oppressive structures.

In this chapter I discuss what it means to come to consciousness. While it is acknowledged that agency accounts for the reproduction and transformation of structures and cultures in social systems or institutions (see Archer 2012, 6), the focus here is on understanding how agency enabled these particular participants to contribute to transforming structures and practices rather than reproducing existing ways of being. I attempt to explain why the individual comes to take action, not the internal workings of the individual's mind. The participants' narratives reveal that a defining factor or moment in the subsequent actions that they engaged in to engender transformation was their ability to see the

problems and issues within their context and the ways in which they are implicated within such issues'. If coming to consciousness allows for the individual to see, know, understand and transform oppressive structures — I argue that coming to consciousness and by extension reflectivity and the reformulation of interests is productive in the sense that it produces individuals who are able to see and reject such structures and then work to change or transform them.

6.2 Catalytic Moments

> … I was in the same Matric class as the first Black student to matriculate at that school and she was an enormous teacher in my life, to meet a peer who was clearly in every way my equal was quite unsettling, it forced me to question everything and to begin to see why things had felt wrong on the farm. The final moment was we went Christmas shopping together at the end of the year and we walked into Wimpy and we were told to leave because of the Whites of the institution and the shock of that for me, I finally saw apartheid, it was like the scales were peeled from my eyes, all the smoke and mirrors stuff that I had grown up with was pulled away and I finally saw what apartheid was and the sense of embarrassment and humiliation on her face is something that haunts me till today. So that moment has shaped everything about the rest of my life, the injustice of that moment, that moment of conscientisation, it crashed into my world. Even as I was fairly low on the White society rank, the fact that I was White had given me, had meant I grew up in this, as I said smoke and mirrors about what apartheid is really about (Kathy).

Hay (2002, 129) argues that agents internalise their perceptions of their contexts which then affects their choices regarding a specific course of action (Hay 2002, 129). Growing up in a very rigid and discriminatory structure, Kathy's encountering of the world through the eyes of the 'other' was unsettling and made her question the structure and the position she occupied within it. The experience of blatant racism towards a Black peer that she had come to recognise as equal to her was a catalytic moment for Kathy. She was finally able to 'see why things had felt wrong' and see apartheid for what it was and that enabled her to critique apartheid structures and want to take action to change them. Coming to consciousness implies a certain level of internal moral and ethical change that gives the agent power in the form of a felt responsibility to act. It allows the individual to challenge previously held conceptions and dominant discourses and creates the possibility for reconstructing a new or different context (see Pease 2000, 145). Kathy's personal experience(s) of injustice enabled her to 'see' or come to consciousness of features of her context that might otherwise have remained occluded, and this then led to her making the choice to take actions towards transformation. Kathy's personal experiences of injustice made her see, she is able to see because of her reformulated interests.

As noted in the previous chapter reformulating interests enables the individual to judge information differently or it shifts the interpretive background of the individual. Thus, it is the reformulation of her interests that enabled Kathy to interpret her experience with her peer as an unjust experience — an acknowledgment that may have otherwise been ignored.

To come to consciousness is to become a knower, to see one's position (i.e interest, wants, ideas and preferences) in relation to the structural relations in which one is embedded and to imaging the possibility for change. This is in contrast to a non-knower who has similar knowledge of her ideas, wants and interests but does not see such ideas as linked or related to structural relations. Thus does not imaging the possibility for change. When one is immersed in a certain identity position and the comforts it confers, as Tracy and Chris note, its workings may be obscured, particularly to those who are served by such structures.

> I suppose intellectually I am aware, I have colleagues who talk about the phenomenon of what they call whiteness, where they talk about how if you live in a culture that is dominated by whiteness, you are not even aware of it and you have to be different from it to be aware of it, so I suppose it is possible that I fit seamlessly into whiteness that I'm not even conscious of the way that that gives me an advantage. In terms of gender, there have been times in which I have felt that I am treated differently because I am a woman but it has only been when I have had contact with the older more conservative White males, people in the administrative side of the University, people in sort of high positions and that level where sometimes when I speak forcefully, I am made to feel that I'm speaking aggressively and then I think maybe that is because of my gender that people do not respond positively to forcefulness and a woman but that has been very seldom (Tracy).
>
> I know that if you are Black at this institution, you are confronted with racism, you see it but it is very hard to see it from the perspective of a White privileged man in particular unless you speak to people as I tend to (Chris).

To understand the need for transformation and therefore to act to try to effect transformation necessarily entails a shift in awareness, it is to remove oneself from the norm, it is to have the scales, as Kathy notes, peeled from one's eyes (see Bartky 1977, 33). The implication of this is that coming to consciousness is then probably a different dynamic for the person for whom the existing structure is comfortable normality and the one who is oppressed or marginalised by that structure. The person who is marginalised by the structure is inherently going to be conscious or aware of such marginalisation (though such awareness does not necessarily imply actions to change the structure)

(see Bartky 1979, 25) — as argued previously, it is the reformulation of interests that does this. Being aware of the structural conditions, the problems within that structure, the need for a change in the structures, are the necessary starting point conditions that motivate the agent to take action towards change. To come to consciousness is the ability to be aware of one's position (dominant/dominated) and the powers and limits that historical contexts confer on that position and the ways in which they constrain and enable different individuals within that context. To be conscious is to see how these structures condition your experience and the experience of others and to be able to devise ways of changing existing practices given this knowledge. Coming to consciousness, as Kathy notes, is that moment of conscientisation where the individual agent is able to see what is wrong with her society, empathise and take action to effect change. This knowing, seeing, awareness, understanding, conscientisation, empathy and consciousness is brought on by a reformulation of interests that then acts as a motivation for change. As argued previously, the reformulation of interests enables the individual to apprehend information and experiences differently, such that it enables the individual to see the possibility for change. The notion of consciousness discussed here is similar to the feminist notion of consciousness-raising (see Bartky 1977, 23). Vincent (2015) drawing on the work of Bob Pease (2000) and Chris Weedon, (1989) defines consciousness-raising as an 'idea of becoming aware, at the conscious level, of things that might be experienced but not consciously known, thought about or understood' (see also Moreau 1990; Sowards and Renegar 2004, 536; Bower 1992).

The idea of consciousness-raising resonates with my argument for coming to consciousness. The consciousness I speak of here is quite similar to Bartky's definition of consciousness that occurs only when the partial or total liberation of women is possible (see Bartky 1977, 23). In line with Bartky's argument, I argue that coming to consciousness occurs in the context of possibilities, what Bartky calls the 'apprehension of possibility' brought on by a reformulation of interests (Bartky 1977, 25). While consciousness-raising occurs within groups, and my focus is on individuals (see also Sowards and Renegar 2004, 536; Maitra 2013, 373), consciousness-raising and coming to consciousness are similar. An individual's ability to come to consciousness or become aware, or know about the socio-political context they inhabit has implications for agency. The individual is able to act to effect change or take action towards transformation when the individual sees or becomes aware of the underlying substratum, discourses, norms, practices and ways of being that allow for discrimination. To 'be' an agent of transformation, one has to 'become' an agent of transformation, and it is this process of becoming that I define as coming to consciousness. To become an agent of transformation is to develop a critically altered consciousness of one's context and one's role/position in that context in

relation to an/other. This involves an acknowledgment of one's position, the privileges that such positions offer one, understanding the problems and the need for change. Bartky (1977, 25) writes, 'the given situation is first understood in terms of a state of affairs not yet actual and in this sense a possibility, a state of affairs in which what is given would be negated and radically transformed'. It means understanding the injustice of the current context or social relations and seeing the need to transform that context — the possibility implied in this kind of consciousness is the individual's ability to imagine a different way of being or social relations/interaction. This kind of consciousness is rooted in and integrally linked with the context, as it is the context that creates the conditions of possibility for transformation. The context enables the individual to understand what is and what ought to be in that context. As Bartky (1977, 26) notes, the relationship between consciousness and concrete circumstance or contexts is dialectical. However, what is peculiar to my definition and deviates from Bartky's definition is the notion of consciousness as 'victimisation' (see Bartky 1977, 26, 27). While I acknowledge the role of oppression in consciousness, as argued in the previous chapter, it is also possible for the non-victim to come to consciousness or become conscious of the peculiar problems within a context. What makes consciousness a condition for the possibility for change is that the reformulation of interests enables an acknowledgement and understanding which then opens up an array of possibilities for the individual to act or not to act. Bob Pease has argued that consciousness enables the exploration of subjectivity within wider political and social processes (Pease 2000, 144; see also Vincent 2015). While he refers to consciousness-raising, his argument highlights the way in which coming to consciousness reflects the interplay between structural properties and personal properties in effecting change.

Here Chris relates an experience which arose in the particular context of South Africa and which he was able to contrast with other experiences in different contexts, and which proved a seminal moment in his own coming to consciousness:

> I have been approached by beggars many times my whole life in all places and that never happened to me that a Black man approaches me and called me master, I didn't know that people refer to each other as master in this time, in our world and my first reaction was…I said very angrily don't call me master and he replied yes master, and I thought well how can this be, what is happening here. And so issues of how race operates started to emerge in my mind upon moving to South Africa and I started to realise the importance of what we call a kind of subconscious be it collective or personal and I started to think about issues of transformation, this is slow, many years of thinking about transformation and how to bring about transformation (Chris).

Chris's experience with the beggar highlights a catalytic moment which began his process of coming to consciousness. What is significant here is Chris's recognition of what one may take for granted as 'normal', specifically the ways in which such normality arises out of his particular positioning. The process of becoming a knower means reflecting on one's actions and taking actions based on one's reflections. What this means is the participants see and reflect on what other people in their position do not see or do not reflect on, and this process of reflection enables them to see or understand differently. Chris reflects on this catalytic moment and understands it as the start of a journey towards thinking, writing and wondering about change.

> I started thinking of, in this context and in other contexts, of the sort of strangeness of some things like the beggar who approached me and I asked him very firmly not to call me master and he replied 'yes master' and the weirdness of that led me to start writing and start thinking about doing it…So how do we change things, so I started to discover if you want that there is a kind of underlying substratum of belief and ways of seeing the world…there is a kind of underlying substratum at universities which we are simply not touching, almost not touching at all — Gadamer referred to it as prejudice. I can definitely take a clear stance I guess and put myself on the soapbox and be the leader of this particular cause because I think you know issues of curriculum development, issues of why we teach what we teach, stuff that I was telling you initially about the strangeness and the underlying substratum and trying to change that, I think those are fundamental issues related to transformation (Chris).

Coming to consciousness is when we are able to see the strangeness of the underlying substratum, the problems with our contexts and the role we play within such contexts whether knowingly or unknowingly. Bob Jessop (1996, 124) argues that actors possess the ability to reflect on their interests and identities, and thus are able to learn from experience which may lead to a change in strategy or action. So for Chris, this began when he was called 'master' — his reflection on that event led to him questioning how race works in the South African context (see also Vincent 2008; Robus and Macleod 2006; Dube 1985; Seekings 2008). This reflection on his identity and interests affected or changed his thinking about the structure and context, specifically how 'strange and weird' it was. This led to writing and thinking about how to bring about transformation. For those who occupy dominant social positions — in this context, White people — seeing the strangeness is a very difficult process as being the norm prevents you from seeing the 'process by which the norm comes into being' (Vincent, 2015). Coming to consciousness then means making the normal strange and as Chris and Kathy describe, turning the normal on its head to see the strange underlying substratum can arise in small critical moments such as when a person is able to recognise injustice. Foucault (1988, 155) notes the

link between transformation and making strange what is considered normal, what he terms 'radical criticism'. Criticism Foucault writes, is 'to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed; to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as difficult' (Foucault 1988, 155). Thus the practice of constant criticism, of making the normal or self-evident strange and as Chris notes, 'thinking of the strangeness', opens up possibilities for transforming social relations.

The result of such reflection and the subsequent 'internal conversation' that took place for both Kathy and Chris was a change in how they would ultimately come to take action or as Jessop (1996) argues, a change in how they conceptualised their interests. As was argued earlier, reflexivity is a condition for coming to consciousness and here we see the role that catalytic moments can play in being an impetus for reflection. So for Kathy the 'continuous monitoring' of her actions (questioning everything), contexts (feeling things were wrong with the context) and the actions of others within that context (i.e. being told to leave because she entered a place reserved for White people in the company of a Black person and the sense of embarrassment and humiliation on her friend's face), led her to see the world of her everyday experience with new eyes and thus to come to appreciate the need to take action to change such conditions (Giddens 1984, 3). For Chris it was the 'weird' experience of a 'Black man calling him master', that led him to question the context, the taken-for-granted ways of being in that context and the effect on individuals within such a context that enabled him to come to consciousness. As Bandura (1989, 1179; 2001) notes, action is a reflection of forethought. Thinking about the bigger process of what causes individuals to act or take actions toward change, catalytic moments like those described by Chris and Kathy, played an immense role in their ability to come to consciousness and eventually in later acts of challenging dominance, interrupting what would otherwise have been for them the relative comfortable of their positions in society (see also Bandura 1989, 1179; 2001). Arising from these interactions with their context were critical incidents that altered their way of seeing. Flanagan (1954) described this as a situation where the 'purpose or intent of the act seems fairly clear to the observer and where its consequences are sufficiently definite to leave little doubt concerning its effects' (see also Msibi 2013, 66). Thus for Kathy and Chris, there was no doubt left in them about the need to engage in actions that would engender transformation. They came to understand the relationship between certain critical incidents and their historical and social context and the effect that had on the experience of others within that context, while at the same time acknowledging their own position. This altered their way of seeing and enabled them to take actions aimed at transformation. Put differently, the reformulation of their interests enabled them to perceive the information they received and their experiences differently,

altered the way in which their experiences were understood and enabled them to take action. Kathy and Chris's situated-ness in the South African context provided the condition and possibility for their agency (see Parkins 2000, 60; Bandura 1989). Their ability to come to consciousness and see the pervasiveness and wrongness of apartheid policies and their embeddedness within current structural relations, allowed for them to act in ways that may be described as going against their 'would be' interests. Archer (2007, 18) argues that while vested interests may be inherited, actors within the social system are not bound to defending them. Rather the decision is governed by their internal deliberations on their experiences within such contexts. Thus their coming to consciousness brought on by a reformulation of their interests, a recognition of their position within their contexts and the attending problems inherent in that context, partly determines whether or not they find the opportunity costs of acting to be worth paying (Archer 2007, 18; Parkins 2000, 62). By becoming knowers, seeing or becoming conscientised, they are able to, by reflecting on their interactions within and with their context, apprehend the possibility for change — in this case the goal of bringing about change within the institutional environment that they find themselves in. Both seeing the problem and apprehending the possibility for change (imagining a different context) are required for action.

Agency thus arises from the experiences of individuals as Parkins (2000, 62) argues 'located and engaged in a specific material and historical situation' as is evident in Natalie's narrative. The process of reflection involves questioning one's position and actions within a specific context. It is through this process of questioning that the individual examines their interaction with their contexts and this process of reflection determines subsequent actions (Myers 1986, 206; Krause 2011). As Natalie notes, thinking critically about her teaching methods in relation to the students and the context, enabled her to become aware of the different backgrounds and experiences of her students and this led to her taking steps to make her course more accessible for those from marginalised groups.

> I can try to think very critically and carefully about what I teach, what example I use, how do I set up the course but sometimes I might just be ignorant. I realise sometimes how out of touch I am with students, so even using an example that any of them will understand, never mind trying to ensure that particularly marginalised students feel ok. You know that is hard enough but I can and should try to see what kind of example or illustration works or whose voice do you validate in the classroom, when you are in a classroom situation, there are certain people that are not speaking or they say something and others don't take them seriously, you know so there are all those everyday things, that one can do to try to validate a particular student [whom] other students are marginalising and things like that, you can do that (Natalie).

Natalie's introspection and questioning enables her to become aware of how her actions and the examples and illustrations she is accustomed to using in her teaching validate or invalidate people and can play a role in either suppressing or magnifying certain peoples' voices over others. The capacity of an agent to act towards transformation is dependent on their ability to see or come to consciousness. Coming to consciousness or seeing is the capability of an agent to see their position within specific contexts and the advantages or disadvantages it gives that individual. Positions can be seen as a social or political position occupied by an individual that constrains as well as provides opportunities for that individual depending on the context (Bhaskar 1998; Archer 1995). This position can be one of a number of features including for example (but not limited to) race, gender, beliefs and language. So for instance the identity 'White and male' confers on that individual specific rules, tasks, duties and rights given by the structures or system (Bhaskar 1998, 41). In the South African context, to be White and male is to occupy a certain position of privilege resulting from apartheid discrimination based on race, gender and ethnicity. Existing literature notes that South African universities are still structured along racial lines with Whites still dominant in the upper echelons of both academic and administrative staff and a dominance of White men in professorial positions while the lower positions continue to be populated by female staff, attempts at improvements notwithstanding (CHE 2004). At the historically white university from which the participants for the present study were drawn, Whites still occupy a very privileged position. For example by 2014 94% of the professoriate was still White with White men occupying 76% of the professoriate (Rhodes University Digest of Statistics 2015). This reveals that even in a university that has made serious attempts at transforming, the structures still perpetuate themselves and favour especially White men (see Mabokela 2001; Cassim 2006; Stanley 2006). Understanding this context is important because to be an agent is to acknowledge one's position in relation to the context in which one lives. Coming to consciousness is the ability to see and acknowledge the opportunities as well as limitations such positions offer and to take actions accordingly. While for many White people in South Africa, their whiteness offers an array of possibilities and for the most part is enabling, for those who want to act on the side of change, it may become a constraint because they are acting against the norm and expectations that are socially prescribed. While racial structures or positions can be both enabling and limiting at the same time, the key is recognising this and seeing the structure as both enabling and limiting.

While I have argued that consciousness is not limited to victimhood, it is important to note that for the most part we are easily made aware of our own oppression because we experience the conditions

as limiting, hostile and alien (see Bartky 1977, 27). However to limit consciousness to consciousness of victimhood is problematic, as this would mean that it is impossible for the dominant to recognise and become aware of his or her privilege. While victimhood does enable consciousness, it is also possible for an individual who occupies a dominant position to recognise, become aware of and acknowledge his or her privilege as argued in the previous chapter. For those marginalised by the structure there may be an inherent consciousness of the violence and injustice of the situation, but this does not necessarily translate into transformative actions. Coming to consciousness is then a different dynamic for the person for whom the existing structure is comfortable and there is a need to distinguish between what makes the oppressed come to consciousness and what makes the oppressor come to consciousness. While for the oppressor/dominant coming to consciousness involves acknowledging one's position and being aware of one's privilege in such a way that it affects behaviour, for the Black woman it means apprehending oneself as a victim of practices, discourses and norms that legitimise certain bodies and experience and seeing the possibility for change (Bartky 1977, 26). While coming to consciousness may be a different dynamic for the person who experiences the structures as comfortable or enabling than the person who experiences the structures as limiting and hostile, the result for both is a discovery and understanding of social relations for what they really are and seeing the possibility for change or being able to imagine a different set of relations (see Bartky 1977, 27). While the causality for consciousness is different for individuals depending on where and how they are situated in the social structure, it is coming to consciousness which creates the possibility for action that is transformative — an interruption of the structure.

> I think a few key things and I can't explain logically or racially is the profound sense of injustice that I grew up with, the fact that I lived through the apartheid era and studied the horrors of racism at its most extreme and the deep imprint that filled these people's lives, there is no question that has shaped me, I think if I were born in 1984 or 94 I would have been a completely different person, the history I lived through has shaped who I am and left me with a lifelong sense of moral outrage and desire to counteract the effects of violence whether that be political, systematic, institutional, interpersonal violence (Kathy).

Sometimes it is your personal experience of injustice and experiencing the context as 'strange' (rather than comfortable and 'normal') that enables you come to consciousness, to see things differently. These experiences shape individuals by allowing for the creation of fields, events and taking actions that contribute to transformation. Thus an essential aspect of agency and coming to consciousness is having experiences that makes an individual rethink his or her position within a given set of social and institutional relations. For Kathy, her lived experiences shaped her identity. Being told to leave a

restaurant because she was with a Black friend finally opened her eyes. As Kathy notes, her 'context and history' shaped her and enabled her desire to, as she puts it, 'counteract the effects of violence whether that be political, systematic, institutional, interpersonal violence' (Kathy). She describes it as her 'lifelong mission to address the effects of violence that my ancestors were part of, established in, and had inherited'. Kathy's personal experiences of the injustice of the apartheid regime and its effects had a profound effect on her conception of the current situation, hence the need as she notes to 'militate against it'. For Kathy being embedded in a racist society and having a Black peer who she described as her equal was unsettling for her as 'it forced me to question everything and to begin to see why things had felt wrong on the farm'. That experience led her to see how things really were and come to consciousness, to question everything and see the need to act. Coming to consciousness then is not just about experiencing an event that makes you see but also being able to see things that other people in your position do not see. It is recognising the problems with the ways in which others in our position see or perceive the situation and how it perpetuates marginalizing discourses.

Apart from race, other factors and experiences (i.e. gender, sexuality, class, age, background and being foreign) are implicated in an individual coming to consciousness. As Coole (2005, 126) notes, the situational context in a way determines agentic capacities. That is, depending on their situation or context, there will be some critical incident that they faced that brings them to consciousness and provides the conditions for choice and action. For James it was coming into the university that created the space for him to 'see the world in a different way and understand himself'. The university exposed him to different experiences and a diverse group of people which allowed for a shift in the way he sees the world. His experiences within the university enabled him to come to consciousness. James describes this as a 'seminal turning point for me in understanding who I was' (James). For Kathy it was her gender and the violence that she experienced that enabled the development of a 'passion and concern' to change things. As Kathy notes, 'the fact that I am woman meant that I had a particular passion and concern. I don't think if I had been a Black woman or man that I would have chosen the PhD research that I chose' (Kathy). Krause (2011, 301) notes that agents act in ways that reflect their 'personal histories that establishes their character and makes them who they are'. Experiences have a way of forcing the individual to acknowledge certain ways of being that they may have otherwise ignored. For Kathy and James their experiences enabled them to see things from a different perspective and this led them to be determined to take actions that contributed to change.

While for Kathy and James growing up and being implicated in the context played a role in their ability to see or come to consciousness, for Thandi it was coming from a different place and the confusion she experienced with the way she was treated as a Black person in South Africa as opposed to where she was coming from that enabled her to question the assumptions that others seemed to have but that did not make sense to her.

> Look, I have come from a place in life where because my parents were activists I have always been confused by South Africa and its conservative racism, and not just conservatism amongst Black people and racism amongst White people. I find South Africa intellectually strange, so I have always found it important for me to say but no that does not make sense because I know something different. I know a different way of doing it. It was never the case that, you know White people just decide to define an agenda for Black people. I don't know that from my home, I come from a space where Black people are the intellectual leaders. How can you just suppress Black people in this space? That does not make sense, you should not do that, you are not going to get anywhere if you do that. Those things came naturally to me because of my home (Thandi).

For Thandi coming from a place where 'Black people are the intellectual leaders' made her question the oppression and marginalisation of Black people in South Africa, as she notes 'it didn't make sense' to her. The incongruence in her experience makes her see her current position as strange. She immediately recognises and is aware that there is something wrong because she 'knows something different' and this then becomes the impetus for her agency to effect change. As the child of exiled political activists, Thandi's experience was one of coming into South Africa from a different context which enabled her to see as strange what others might have regarded as the norm. Carol similarly experienced coming to university as a 'coming in from the outside' which meant that she had a sense of estrangement that enabled her to see unfairness and the social norms that govern practices in the university.

> I had been a first generation student and I was alienated, I found it the most alienating cultural space, everybody I mixed with in (school), they were from the elite classes and they had been to the best private schools and they were enormously rich and I found it socially a very alienating space. But the other thing was I never knew what I was supposed to do, if someone would only give me the slightest clue and so what I did was I worked by guess work and the guess work usually left me with a knot in my stomach…then I went back to the University and that allowed me to start to make sense of the experience and I began to see that education isn't socially, culturally, politically neutral and that then set me on the road to

> understanding teaching and learning as this profoundly cultural space and an unfair space (Carol).

For Carol, being first generation and her lack of understanding of what she was supposed to do in the university, set in motion events that would later lead her to take actions towards transformation. Carol's experience of alienation and exclusion were critical moments for her as they defined her future course of actions. Because of this experience she became involved in creating ways in which students with different backgrounds coming into the university for the first time can feel comfortable and included. For Carol going back to the university and reading theory enabled her to understand her prior experiences and make sense of the alienation and lack of understanding she felt in her earlier years in university. As she notes, she began to see that education and the university is not 'socially, culturally, politically neutral'. Her experience enabled her to see and understand the university as 'this profoundly cultural space and an unfair space' which determined her choice to be a person who would want to take action to effect change.

Inga's negative experiences as a Black woman and a foreigner in South Africa catalysed her decision to become someone who, despite her privileged upper middle class upbringing, is able to recognise and respond to the marginalisation of others. She uses her own experiences as the impetus for acting to facilitate in particular the progress of Black females.

> As a woman of colour, coming from a different country and being a foreigner, I am more enabling because whatever I do for my students in a positive way is what I have undergone in a negative way. So, the only way I respond is making it positive for my students who don't have the privileges that some other students have, by creating spaces for them. I couldn't have done this 12 years ago when I came, because I didn't know what this meant. I came from a country where I was in the upper middle class family. I had everything I needed. But, constantly I have remained in a phase where I don't have the money to offer to people to say come work with me. And then I started attracting funds at the university level. So, consciously I made sure that that funding was used for Black females who would normally not get the funding. And that is what I have consciously done. Work with Black African females who don't have other options (Inga).

As Inga notes, she is able to do this because of the negative experiences she has had, which leads her to want to create a place for those who would not otherwise have access to privileges such as funding. Her own experiences as an outsider enable her to see the structural conditions of the university that alienates and marginalises some and she is able to use her power to respond to those who most need assistance and who have 'no other options'.

Echoed in each of these participants' stories are ways in which their experiences enabled them to see things differently or come to consciousness as a result of being in one way or another personally estranged from the taken-for-granted norms prevailing in the institution and the society. What is perhaps evident in these personal experiences of strangeness is participants' critical engagement with their context. A further requirement for coming to consciousness is the ability for the agent to empathise and see beyond the particularity of their own point of view and life experience. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the ability to see beyond one's experience is a necessary condition for taking action aimed at transformation.

6.3 Empathising

> I think I have aligned myself with a particular style of teaching which tries to try conquer these divides. If I do not stand for those things such as community engagement, I feel embarrassed, I feel like what am I standing for…my purpose would be yeah cashing in my chips of my life yeah I don't know. I am very naïve in the way I am putting it, in some ways I don't really see myself as a White male — I would like to think that the way I practice I try to minimise that fact. I am not trying to cash in on that, I am trying to deconstruct that position of privilege in a way intellectually and also in practice. I think it is difficult but I am aware of that (James).

To come to consciousness is also to empathise. When the individual acknowledges and understands their position and its associated injustices he/she would want to take action to change such situations. For James coming into the university and being exposed to other ways of being and realising his position and the effects of the legacies of Apartheid led him to try to conquer these divides through his teaching. He would rather not try to 'cash in' on his being a White man and in a position of privilege, and tries to deconstruct that position and power. It is because James understands the historical context of discrimination and empathises that he is able to act towards transformation. Similarly Chris and Natalie:

> The only thing that is very frustrating, which hurts me a lot but it is not something that I could say, well I have done things about it in indirect ways, is that a lot of stories that I hear from Black students and staff about their experiences at Rhodes, I find it really really hard and it is hard because I don't see it and that disconcerts me, bothers me, and it is hard but I believe it is there, I have no doubt that it is there

> especially given the regularity at which I get these stories, told from many different people (Chris).

> In order to really effect transformation at this institution, I need to understand how a Black students entering this institution might feel and it is harder for me to understand that than for somebody who is of that background. So when I walk around the campus, I don't feel alienated, now some students do. So they walk in here and this thing makes them feel comfortable and that thing makes them feel uncomfortable, I don't know what those things are and I can ask people and I can try to make sense but it is much harder for me because, these things are not making me feel uncomfortable. So part of it is just my, a lot of it has to do with my personal characteristics that make me not the best person to be able to perceive these things and to enact action in relation to these things (Natalie).

To empathise is to make normal strange. Making normal strange, it is to try to see outside one's perspective or experiences as Natalie and Chris talk about trying to do. Chris recognises his inability to see outside his own experiences, he realises the limitations his race and gender places on him and his frustration with this reflects his empathy. Because he does not personally experience it, he is unable to take specifically directed actions to effect change, he can only understand via the experience of the other and this makes acting difficult. Natalie notes a similar difficulty with her inability to take specific actions because her race prevents her from understanding the experience of Blacks. Because she cannot perceive these things it is difficult for her to respond to them. Chris and Natalie experience frustration because they empathise, and for them feeling or being able to see these subtle experiences of discrimination lead to them wanting to take direct action towards change.

To empathise is also to constantly question one's position and actions even if one is acting on the side of transformation as Dana's narrative reveals:

> Some of these people who are always called upon to lead these transformation agendas are inevitably White women and I think, what's with that! It is always the same people who are asked…it is like, you know where are the kind of people with Black skin who are experiencing kind of subversive racism every single day of their lives, I mean I can never experience that, I haven't the slightest clue what that is like, yet there are all these White female academics who are leading all these things, yes because they care about them, but what happens is the debate gets shored off and you think well where are the other voices within that? Why aren't others being brought in? (Dana).

To empathise is to become aware of the deeply embedded cultures and norms and the way they condition human action, such that even when we are trying to change them they still condition our

actions. Through questioning, Dana is able to see that the institution still excludes Black bodies and voices even when the focus is on transforming. Empathising then not only enables one to question their power, position and try to understand the experiences of the other, it also enables one to question those actions that are taken to towards transformation. It is the ability of the individual to see how normalising tendencies affect actions taken to effect change and reflects participants trying to understand and genuinely see the world from the point of view of the other. As Dana, Natalie and Chris's narratives reveal, to empathise is to come to consciousness. For them including and sharing the experiences of the previously marginalised comes to be seen as essential to the transformation project.

To empathise is also to have a moral and ethical commitment and a sense of responsibility to effecting transformation as West and Daryl note:

> I tend to torture myself, I grew up as very strictly educated Catholic, I have a great sense of guilt unfortunately, for me and maybe sometimes for the people around me. I think the way in which I have been educated and maybe my personality as well, want fairness around myself. When I have the possibility of talking to the various people that interact in my life on the same level, then I am happy. If not I am not happy and then if I see people that struggle along, nobody cares about that, I really get unhappy. So the fundamental thing is that I would like a fair world for everybody (West).
>
> I do have a great, a deep sense of responsibility that we are answerable…the most important thing for me is that I needs to be answerable to myself, to what I call the person in the mirror and to my own calling and capabilities, that is what I am answerable to and each of us are. I have got to answer to myself not to a head of Department or VC or anybody. We do these things because we believe they are our right. I have got a great sense and belief that we can make things happen and that in fact we have a responsibility to make things happen, so it is as simple as that if I feel something ought to happen, then I feel that I probably have a role to play and a responsibility to make it happen at least to some degree. I cannot just depend on others or look to others (Daryl).

Power is revealed by the 'attribution of specific acts by specific agents of responsibility for the realisation of a specific range of effects in specific contexts' (Jessop 1996, 124-126). In this study, participants drew their power from an ethical place which conferred a sense of responsibility to change the current structures within the university context. Alex draws his power to act from wanting to create fairness. He understands the historical context and the wrongness associated with it and thus chooses to try to act on the side of justice and fairness. For Daryl, having a sense of responsibility

makes him want to effect change. He understands the problems brought on by a history of discrimination which he inherited, hence he sees himself as being answerable tfor ensuring change and remedying the mistakes of the past. He acts on the side of transformation because he sees it as his duty -- he believes it is right and that he has a responsibility to ensure the removal of those structures and cultures that breeddiscrimination. For other participants like Thandi, Kathy, Chris and James, the sense of wrongness of the current context echoed throughout their narratives and this provides one account for why actions were subsequently taken to engender change. Coming to consciousness enabled them to see the problems and wrongness of the situation and influenced their choices when acting.

> I do and I think there are different types of power to act and I think I am very fortunate that my early formations came out of anti-apartheid activities but of course more than anything it is true on the moral power, a sense of moral authority to act, rather than a power that came out of the particular position or racial identity, nonracial, nonsexist activities in two words…a Democratic free society and so I think that just because of who mentored me and who sorts me in my early days as an activist, I have been very privileged to develop and understand the role of moral power in decisions to act or not act (Kathy).

As Kathy notes, there are different types of power to act and one of them comes from a sense of moral authority or responsibility as Daryl notes. Daryl's narrative highlights the sense of responsibility inherent in agency. The idea of responsibility implies being answerable and held accountable for one's actions (see Krause 2011, 316). For Daryl having a sense of responsibility towards change enabled him to take action. The implication of this is that the power to act is drawn from a moral and ethical place where the individual feels a sense of responsibility to make things right. Krause (2011, 316) writes, as 'democratic citizens, our obligation to respect and nourish the freedom of our fellow calls us to be co-participants in the affirmation of one another's subjective existence and to be alive to the ways that our own agency sometimes obstructs this end'. Given the context of South Africa, agency and individuals' power to take actions towards transformation can be defined in terms of morality and ethics. Having a sense of morals and ethics allows or motivates the individual to act on the side of transformation. It can be argued that that sense of morality or ethics enables the individual's ability to see or come to consciousness. So in the different narratives either of acknowledging privilege, understanding the need for transformation, emphasising how personal experiences of injustice enabled a person to come to 'see' — there was an element of ethics were the current situation (structures, cultures, practices and processes) felt wrong, hence the need to change them. I argue that this feeling of unfairness, inequality and injustice as West notes, led to participants

taking actions that engendered change. The sense of wrongness makes the participant question the status quo and realise the need for change. It is from this place that they draw their personal powers to act towards change even if it may not be in their best interests, narrowly defined. Power for an agent or these participants is drawn from their ability to see/come to consciousness, which is brought on by having a moral or ethical code that enables them to recognise injustice.

6.4 Acknowledging Privilege

Vincent (2015) argues that in the South African context, for both the dominant and oppressed groups, 'consciousness raising' is about coming to realise that both privilege and disadvantage have a great deal to do with larger social processes rather than individual attitudes. To acknowledge one's privilege is to acknowledge the varied experiences people within a context have given their race, class and gender. Leonard (2004, 137) argues that privilege is granted even though individuals conferred with privilege may not recognise its comforts. Thus to come to consciousness is to acknowledge how the comfort and inclusion that one is experiencing is not unrelated to, for instance, race, gender and the historical context — and that someone with a different body will experience something different because the structure shapes experience. Daryl and John's narrative highlights this:

> I spoke about it being a male dominated culture, well I am a male, so for me to come in, well it was a White male dominated culture, I come in as a White male, I know some of the discourse, I can understand some of the ways, there's certain bravado sometimes in the ways men talk or joke or deal with things. If you come from that culture, I went to a boys high school, I can understand, I wasn't part of, I hopefully didn't get sucked into it but I can deal with it, so in some ways when I say I have had freedom here, yeah it is because I have fitted in more comfortably. A young introvert Black woman coming to this would not have felt that, you know because it is a different kind of context and discourse etc. (Daryl).

> ....I think that I benefited tremendously, and there is a lot of guilt which goes with that and I really need to.... I do need to work to make this a better country to live in and I have got children growing up and it is going to be an important place for them to live in...please don't be offended by this, I am a White man and I can't do anything about that, I cannot change that at all and in South Africa there's always going to be a stigma attached to that but having said that growing up here in the 1980s I benefited tremendously from the apartheid era, my parents were blue collar workers and yet I got, my father was basically a driver, my mother was a secretary, if I was a different colour, my father would have been a driver and my mother would have been a domestic worker but because I was White I got to go to really good

> schools, I came to this University, I got massive opportunities and so there is a guilt that goes with that, there has to be (John).

As a result of the legacy of apartheid South African society is divided along race, class and gender lines. Universities continue to be structured by norms that many find alienating and marginalising (see DoE 2008; Kistner 2011). Research notes that exclusionary and racist norms continue to shape the lives and experiences of individuals within universities. These studies note that the norms, attitudes and dominant practices that exist in these institutions affect those who are considered to be 'different' – that is to say different to the historically constructed raced and gendered norms and expectations, hence the need for change (Lewin 2010; Kistner 2011; Steyn and van Zyl 2011). This reflects the way in which the university is governed by certain rules and norms and discourses that guide social relations. The historically white nature of the University has ensured the embeddedness of these discourses, structures, practices, processes and ways of being which reflect the dominance of a White culture. Daryl acknowledges that by occupying the body that he does (race and gender) he fitted in more easily and thus experienced the structures as enabling. To acknowledge privilege is to understand where one comes from and how historical contexts shape experiences. He acknowledges the structure in which he is implicated and his position within such structures. For Daryl and John, coming to consciousness means not just acknowledging their positions but also recognising the varied experiences of 'the other' within that context — the realisation that one's own experience is not everyone's experience. Acknowledging privilege enables the individual to constantly question their positions in relation to the context. To come to consciousness is then to be aware, to constantly question oneself. For John, acknowledging his position in relation to the historical circumstance that put him in that position created guilt and made him want to take action that would effect change. The fact that he feels guilty reveals someone who is able to see and acknowledge the effects of apartheid legacies which influences his choices to take action to effect change in the present.

Sometimes it is not race or gender that motivates coming to consciousness but a shift in one's orientation and class as Thandi's narrative portrays. While on the face of it, it may seem that race for the most part determines and colours one's ways of seeing and being in the sense that if you are White then you are privileged, and if you are Black you lack access to privilege — class also plays a role in shaping perspective including in South Africa where race often seems to predominate. Thus for example a middle class Black South African may not experience the same level or type of structural limitations or constraints as a working class Black South African and therefore may not see the need to change or want to change the structures. As Thandi's narrative depicts, while her blackness and

the way it is constructed in the South African context forces her to see the limitations imposed by racism, there are some things she is unable to see because of her middle class background. Thus seeing means becoming aware of that privilege and the limitations it places on acknowledging and seeing.

> …Your whole orientation forces you to see the whole scope of the world because you are constructed in a particular way and myself as a Black South African, I have a particular orientation which forces me to see the White world, this world, I have to see all these things so I can survive. There's things that I am privileged with regard to that I don't have to see because I am middle class and I am Black South African, so I don't have to know what is happening in the centre of town where a lot of African nationals live. But that becomes privileged now you must be aware, the only time one is interacting is when one is entering into a hair salon for help and then you see a difference space of Grahamstown, White South Africans are worse off because, they are worse off in a sense that we just have to see. So the university's oriented like that, it is a world where we just have to focus on ourselves in a particular sort of elite largely White middle-class place, everything else is by the way, but the orientation is not to the majority's worldview, so when we talk of success, success towards what we have not succeeded here because we have not shifted that orientation (Thandi).

To come to consciousness is then to shift one's orientation. While for those who occupy dominant positions, coming to consciousness involves recognising the experience of the other, for the dominated, it is 'about becoming aware of the processes through which they have come to occupy those positions' (Vincent 2015). For Daryl, John and Kathy their whiteness and in the case of Daryl and John, gender, played significant roles in their coming to consciousness in the sense of questioning their positions in relation to their contexts and the power and powerlessness that was conferred on them by historical circumstances and this enabled a shift in their orientation where they wanted to take action towards change. Thandi acknowledges that her class grants her some power and privilege. Her acknowledgement of the position she occupies by virtue of her class enables her to shift her orientation. Acknowledging one's position (race, class, and gender) in relation to one's context, shifts the individual's orientation and enables an understanding of the need for transformation and subsequently influences the choice or decision to act towards transformation.

6.5 Becoming knowers: Reconfiguring perceptions

> …my eyes have been open to what happened in this country over the last 30 years or 40 years and I know that where I have come from is wrong and I understand the need for change. I still think I have probably learnt the most from this University, so for me background — a very privileged White upbringing and understanding what is going on at the University, what is going on in the country … and I have tried in the last six years just to use that broader appreciation to promote change (Alex).

Hay (2002, 129) argues that because the agent is able to internalise their perceptions of their contexts, this affects the agent's choices with regard to embarking on a specific course of action (Hay 2002, 129). Over 20 years after the demise of apartheid, it has been extremely difficult to effect change, particularly in historically white universities. Thus, individuals who seek to change these contexts are seen as 'strange' in those contexts and are constructed as outsiders. Lewin (2010, 130) argues that universities' refusal to acknowledge and deal with 'normative standards' and 'cultural attributes' associated with whiteness and patriarchy creates an inhospitable and unwelcoming culture where certain groups continually feel excluded (see also Kistner 2011). The MCTHEI also, characterised institutional cultures of universities as inhospitable as a result of racial discrimination, harassment, sexism, a pervading sense of whiteness, colour blindness and an aspiration to western ideals with many of the institutions refusing to acknowledge the realities faced by marginalised individuals (DoE 2008). By acknowledging privilege the agent becomes aware of their position and the power relations that allow for the marginalisation of a specific group. Because they are aware of their privilege and power, they are able to internalise this and thus become what I refer to here as 'knowers'. Becoming a knower implies not just acknowledging but understanding the context and this enables a shift in the individual's way of seeing. Vincent (2015) describes this as a 'process where individuals come to greater understanding of how social relations play themselves out in our own lives'. Therefore, coming to consciousness can be described as individuals becoming knowers because they are able to understand the need for transformation given their understanding of the context which they inhabit. Their insight enables them see the need to transform such contexts. Thus Hay and Wincott (1998, 955) note that change occurs in the interrelationship between actors and their context. Participants' stories reflected a relationship between understanding the need for transformation and subsequently taking action that may effect changes in the structure. The legacies of apartheid ensured the exclusion and marginalisation of Blacks and women and historically white universities especially embody this lasting legacy. As Alex notes, this process of understanding the historical context and current situational context is important to an individual's ability to take action towards transformation. As

Bartky (1977, 33) argues, 'understanding things makes it possible to change them'. Coming to consciousness leads to the active formulation of action through acknowledging and understanding the context (see Takhar 2011, 343). Alex's 'eyes being opened' reflects knowing and understanding the process that put him in a privileged position. What is perhaps significant about Alex's narrative is the contrast with those academics interviewed for the pilot study who kept saying 'tell me what it is', 'I do not understand'. Not understanding can be described as a tool used to resist having to take actions aimed at transformation. To understand, then, is to imply that you know what to do. Coming to consciousness may thus be said to be not only about 'seeing' but also understanding. To come to consciousness is to have one's eyes opened to the power relations and discourses that ensure the continued domination of some groups and the subjugation of others. Citing the work of Merleau-Ponty, Romdenh-Romluc (2011, 79) argues that action is a result of an individual's apprehension of her environment which enables an understanding not only of the need to effect change but what kinds of action might be taken in order to achieve this goal (see also Bartky 1977, 28). Chris talks about the movement from discomfort to realisation followed by insight into what he personally is and is not able to do.

> White people and White men in particular have been on top of the pecking order for too long and it is part of the injustice, I think one of the things that is going to need transformation…I think the primary transformation I agree with is the transformation of the mind and that transformation comes when Black people take leadership positions, they are the ones' that champion their own cause. I can't liberate anyone but I assist, there are abilities that I have, I have got privileges that come by virtue of the fact that I am middle class and privileged and male and White that can be used for the sake of transformation…the other thing is the fact that I am from nowhere and being a White male, my voice also counts …Some of the things that helped me, is the fact that I am kind of from nowhere, I feel very uncomfortable being White and male but at the same time I realised that is what I am and I can't change that but I can change my attitude towards that and try to undermine the structures that make it the case that White men are at the pinnacle of the pecking order, the kind of structural pecking order (Chris).

To become a knower is to see what other people in your position may not see. It is being able to see the underlying discourses and how they affect one's power and access to resources and privileges in relation to structures. You do not just see but you know and understand. Chris acknowledges his privilege and the power attached to that. Because he knows and has come to consciousness he is able to shift that power and use it to engender transformation. Such knowledge then becomes available to the individual to use in any given situation (Giddens 1977). The current university system was created

to serve White people and especially White males (see Higgins 2007; Steyn 2005). However, rather than use this power to maintain or reproduce the system, Chris coming to consciousness enables him to use his power for transformation. For Chris, being White and male makes him uncomfortable because he knows that not everyone experiences his privileges and comforts. In part this insight rests on his own experience of discomfort as a result of being from 'nowhere'. He is able to change his attitude from one of discomfort and use it to engender transformation because he has come to consciousness — he knows, acknowledges, understands and is able to reconfigure or shift his attitude given this knowledge (see Romdenh-Romluc 2011). Coming to consciousness enables him to understand the structures and ways in which power works through one's race and gender He is thus able to undermine those structures, discourses and norms that allow for race, class or gender to confer privileges on some and to exclude or marginalise others.

For Natalie and Thandi, becoming knowers' means understanding the subtle ways in which structures, cultures and practices undermine Blacks and reinforce exclusion. To become a knower is to see the ways in which historical legacies and contemporary practices work to exclude even in the face of seeming inclusion. Becoming knower's means understanding the ways in which our practices reflect such tendencies.

> …when you are the only, when you are in a certain way you are the only person who is a member of a particular group, say you are the only Black person or you are the only woman, that in itself has a kind of effect on you that you feel like you don't belong even if people don't treat you badly because you just around and you can just see that it seems that this is not where I belong because there aren't people like me. So in this institution where very often it is not so much of gender but of race, very often Black staff members are the only like one Black staff member in their Department that in itself is a barrier. Our students are taught by White people, so they get a sense of academia is not really for them, they are reading texts by White people, there is a kind of a subtle argument that people like you don't produce knowledge, because you don't see it, so those are subtle barriers. So nobody is saying to the students, people like you do not produce knowledge but they are prescribing 15 texts by White men. Implicit in that is that you the Black woman are not a producer of knowledge, you do not see yourself there (Natalie).
>
> I come from a country where people are denied access to institutions not because they were not intelligent enough but because there is a history of preferring Whites, there is a history of inequality, there's a history of preferring certain schools. I had a friend who came here and the Dean, who is now retired looked at the person's marks and says, oh you are not going to make it if you do these subjects, if you do

> sociology because you come from a Black school, so my friend was like I will register for Politics and the Dean said fine, I am going to put here that you registered for Politics against my wishes. The guy got a Masters in Politics (Thandi).

Scholars writing on agency (see for instance Archer 1995; Callinicos 2004) note that if one experiences the conditions as constraining then one would want to change such conditions, as Natalie and Thandi do. Even if the conditions are not overtly constraining or limiting, just the feeling of being outside or not belonging or being different (whether it is a Black person in a White dominated setting or a White person in a Black dominated setting) — may make the individual want to change such situations so that they can feel included or come to experience themselves as insiders. As Natalie notes, being the only person of a particular racial or gender group makes you feel like an outsider and this is a barrier in the sense that conditions will be experienced as constraining. Implicit in the White curriculum, White lecturers and White knowledge production is a very subtle understanding or knowledge that the system is 'Whites only' even though the end of apartheid ensured the removal of the blatant discrimination against Blacks and women (Robus and Macleod 2006; Madlingozi 2007; van Wyk 2004). As Thandi notes, the ways in which the system is structured excludes the 'other' in a subtle way as what underlies the 'other's' presence in that context is the feeling of not belonging. Thandi notes that historically, there has been a practice of 'preferring Whites over Blacks' (see Robus and Macleod 2006, 473). For instance Mabokela (2000, 111) in her study on how policies and programmes at one university in South Africa were implemented to diversify the institution's racial composition, found that one argument against affirmative action policies was 'it will lower standards' (see also Anderson et.al. 1993; Thomson 1973). This not only perpetuates the exclusion of previously marginalised groups but also conditions their experiences once they get in. The implication of this in the South African context is that for the most part being Black, working class or female means that those in such positions will want change. However as Chris's narrative shows this need not necessarily be the case. Sometimes being White and male and recognising the power and access which makes him uncomfortable, makes him want to see change. So you do not have to necessarily experience the conditions as constraining to want to take actions that change such structures. Chris is aware of the conditions, however is no longer defined or limited by them (see Maitra 2013, 639). In Chris's case his coming to consciousness makes him want to take action to effect change even though he experiences the conditions as enabling rather than constraining. Natalie's experience is similar.

> So those are just some of the invisible barriers and then they can just be all kinds of ways of doing things that might feel more comfortable for some people and alienating for other people. I worry about it because I haven't felt, I have felt more

> comfortable at Rhodes than in the University of Pretoria for example. I am from a White, English-speaking background, and the University of Pretoria is a very Afrikaans place, this is a more English-speaking place, it is my cultural milieu, so maybe that is why it is easier for me to pretend, but if you're not from a White English speaking middle-class background, then you might not understand the jokes people make, saying something that other people think is inappropriate because you are just coming from a different set of norms and values. So you just, you might just keep on feeling like you do not fit in, that you don't belong and things like that and those are important barriers to explore (Natalie).

To be an agent of change is to recognise invisible barriers brought on by histories designed to preserve a particular race, even if one is not limited by these barriers. Coming to consciousness is worrying about occupying that comfortable space so that you do not recognise these barriers because you do not experience them. It is to recognise how your historical context, infused with raced and gendered inequities may preclude you from seeing the problem and taking action to rectify injustices or engender change. Natalie recognises this and constantly questions her position and power and the kinds of access it gives her so that she may not be able to see or acknowledge the experience of the 'other'. She is able to do so because she knows and this makes her want to constantly explore those norms and ways of being that present barriers for some while enabling others. Natalie and Chris's narrative portray individuals who constantly question their interactions with the ideas, discourses and individuals within their context. It is this process of questioning and acknowledgment that makes such agents of transformation knowers as a result of their having come to consciousness and it is this that enables them to take the decision to act to effect change. This form of interaction with the context leads to the emergence of new meanings and understanding (see De Jaegher and Froese 2011, 451).

Becoming conscious, as Daryl pointed out, is a process rather than an event and there is a relationship between changes in the context and the possibilities for consciousness. Being confronted with a more diverse student body meant that he was less able to take for granted his own worldview.

> So if we talk about interventions I am very conscious of so much of what we do is implicit because of our backgrounds and understanding of things and I have become more conscious in the last couple of years of us needing to be more explicit in terms of what we mean. So in that sense yes I have become more conscientised or sensitive to be more explicit, you know I think one takes so much of one's own cultural background baggage whatever as implicit and for granted and when you are speaking to a student audience that mostly shares that one can take things for granted. I become more conscious, of being more explicit with expectations, with values, with perspectives, worldview etc. yeah (Daryl).

Those who attempt to change find it much more difficult as past guidelines become more and more difficult to follow because the situation is a novel one (see Archer 2012, 6). Hence 'each subject has to make his or her own way through the world without established guidelines — a process which cannot be conducted in terms of tactic knowledge or as 'second nature', but necessarily by virtue of internal deliberations' (Archer 2012, 6; see also Archer 2007, 3-5). As Daryl and Alex note the process of coming to consciousness was not intentional (in the sense of deciding to take action or being deliberately chosen) but was mediated by a number of factors (personal and structural) that led to new insight. It is not an immediate thing that just happened suddenly but was rather something that happened over time as a result of constantly questioning and reflecting on their relations and interactions — which then influenced their choices when it came to acting — for example their teaching.

6.6 Conclusion

Coming to consciousness can be seen as the condition that leads to agents to taking action: being aware of their position and privilege and the understanding of the need for change enables the agent to take actions towards change. Coming to consciousness enables the agent to want to push for change or transformation. In the university context, especially a White context which has served a particular race and class for a long time, changing is especially difficult because there are those with vested interests who want to reproduce or maintain the status quo and those who want to change the system. While it is true that those who find the system enabling will want to maintain the system, the data revealed that this is sometimes not the case -- that for the most part these agents were able to reformulate their interests which is very significant to agency and the choices made when acting. Thus agency is seen in an individual's ability to reformulate their interests which enables them to become conscious and, on this basis, to decide to act.

In the previous chapter, I argued that the reformulation of interests points to agency being related to the possibility as Vincent (2015, 34) argues, of alternative subjective positioning (see also Maitra 2013, 361, 369). The reformulation of interests enables the individual to apprehend information differently because the background against which information is judged is changed and this enables the individual to come to consciousness. I argue that an individual's ability to 'come to consciousness' plays a significant role in the actions they take and/or the roles they decide to play in the university – whether to reproduce or to maintain existing structures. It is because they are able to become aware of the system in which they are implicated and the problems within that system that they are able to

reformulate their interests (see also Jessop 1996; Hay 2002). To come to consciousness is, then, to come to see things differently; it is to come to know the truth about oneself in relation to one's context (see Bartky 1977, 33). What is created by consciousness is the possibility for action and transformation. As Bartky (1977, 33) notes through consciousness 'we are able to make out possibilities for liberating collective action as well as unprecedented personal growth — possibilities that a deceptive sexist (colonial, apartheid)[17] social reality has heretofore concealed'. It is this possibility created by consciousness that enables the individual to take actions --- both discursive and material -- to bring about change. The process of coming to consciousness or becoming knowers can be described as a process in which agents come to take action. The agent's ability to fight or engage in various acts whether overt or subtle in pursuance of change is indicative of this and will be discussed in the next chapter.

[17] My emphasis

7 Chapter
Battles

7.1 Introduction

> The properties and powers of the human being are neither seen as pre-given, nor as socially appropriated, but rather these are emergent from our relations with our environment. As such they have relative autonomy from biology and society alike, and causal powers to modify both of them (Archer, 2000, 87).

> But you know, there are battles going on under the surface I guess (James).

In the previous chapter, I argued that an essential element of having the agency to effect transformation, in a context where deeply embedded racist and sexist legacies ensure the reproduction of structures, is the ability of the agent or actor to 'see' or 'come to consciousness'. This chapter, in line with the previous argument, examines the effect of an agent coming to consciousness. In this chapter, I argue that engaging in battles (which can be both discursive and material) is integral to agency and is an essence of an agent's capacity to take actions towards transformation. As was highlighted in the last two chapters, Archer argues that structures have constraining and enabling properties and that this creates a situation in which those who experience the conditions as enabling seek to reproduce the existing structure and those who experience the conditions as constraining seek to change such structures (Archer 1995, 90; 2000; Clegg 2006). She further argues that the final outcome, which can be reproduction or transformation, results from the concessions and conflicts that unfold within the social system (Archer 1995, 91). By concessions I mean the tradeoffs (discussed further below) that occur in the process of transforming structures and cultures and by conflicts I mean the battles that individuals engage in during the transformation process. If the final outcome is dependent on concessions and conflicts, I argue that transformation happens as a result of agents' constant interactions, struggles and involvement with the system which produces these concessions and conflicts — in all their particularity (see Archer 1995; Giddens 1979; 1984; Callinicos 2004; Coole 2005; De Jaegher and Froese 2009). Moreover, transformation may not necessarily be a direct result of overt conflicts, sometimes, the individual's ability to persuade or get others to accept an idea in order to attain a specific interest or goal, leads to change.

More specifically, this chapter discusses how the participants engaged in discursive and material battles when taking action to effect change and how, as actors, they can be seen to have been

materially produced by discursive constructions. By discursive, I mean the ideological world characterised by language (written and spoken) and by material, I mean the actual, concrete observable world (including bodily productions). The participants' stories discussed in this chapter reveal that these individuals were in one way or another engaged in struggles both overt and subtle when they took actions that sought to engender change as Chris and Alex describe:

> …a lot of stories that I hear from Black students and staff about their experiences at this university, I find it really hard, I have no doubt that it is there especially given the regularity at which I get these stories, told from many different people…there are departments in this University where there is far more, there is a lot of frank and overt hostility among colleagues and some of it is race, racially related like cases in Engineering[18] but others are not so obviously about that I guess I'm much more…in some cases, I tend to be much more cautious, I mean there are things I won't say (Chris).

> …hearing from the VC and the DVC how difficult they found it being Black and male at this University and how they both feel they are continually under scrutiny and people are looking at them, waiting for them to make a mistake, waiting for them to do something that is expected, you know favour their wives, turn up late, I don't know. And when I heard them say that…it is horrible to think that there are people looking at them, waiting and expecting those sorts of things to happen. But also they are people that I respect who have been here for 8 years, feeling continually under scrutiny. So clearly it is not as welcoming a place as I would like it to be (Alex).

Participants spoke of their personal experiences of conflict, the battles they saw themselves continually engaged in, in a context of 'frank and overt hostilities' among staff within the university. While there were also stories which some, like Chris, decided not to speak about — things that 'are not so obvious' and 'things I won't say' — there were traces of their own experiences of conflicts even within such stories. Echoing through the data were the silences of untold battles and stories of conflicts within participants' narratives of their own experiences as well as the experiences of others. Van Manen (1997, 112) notes the importance of acknowledging the silences in narratives. Robert Benford (2002) alludes to these kinds of stories as a common strategy in which the individual relates his or her experience through the experience of others. These stories provide a window into the struggles that occur in universities and point to the fact that there exist wider arenas of conflict than the participants' own personal experience of conflicts.

[18] The name of the department was changed for reasons of preserving confidentiality and anonymity.

Words like 'obstacles', 'barriers', 'struggles', 'differences', 'disagreement', 'struggle' and 'enemies', which Natalie speaks of, highlight the kind of battles and conflicts that occur within universities:

> I would not say that people here have put big obstacles personally in my way, I think those obstacles I was mentioning are general. I don't think they are specific to me…I just feel that those barriers apply generally. I think academics struggle to work as teams, I think we are not very good team people and in order to change things we need to work together and sometimes quite small differences in terms of….people want change but they may be slightly disagree on some things and they can't work together, because this one said something or disagreed on a particular issue and then they are enemies and what you end up with is these three people and those two people and those five people… (Natalie).

As Natalie notes, these conflicts arise in the context of individuals with different views, ideas and ideologies competing for resources and access to power, and defending their interests. A number of studies on agency address the conflicts that occur in social settings (see Archer 1995; Giddens 1979; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Swartz 1997; Cohen 1989; Tucker 1998). The consensus is that these struggles and conflicts need to be understood in the context of the constraints and enablements that individuals within these social relations experience or encounter. The implication of this for agency is that in any given social system, the potential for conflict is always implicated in action. When an agent takes actions towards change, he/she may have to engage in specific kinds of battles or struggles to achieve a goal or defend a position. These struggles can be discursive where agents have to work at the discursive level to effect change. They can also be material, where agents experience physical/material constraints and have to engage materially in order to defend their positions or interests.

This chapter examines the discursive and material aspects of conflicts that arise when individuals attempt to exercise agency and take action aimed at change. It also highlights the ways in which structures maintain/reproduce themselves materially and discursively. Since structures are maintained both discursively and materially, I argue that when actors engage in battles or struggles to effect transformation, such struggles occur both at a discursive and material level. To make my argument I position the university as a field characterised by conflicts and fractures, brought on by the diverse and conflicting interests that constitute it. I then examine the various discursive and material ways in which the participants took action aimed at transformation. Finally, I argue that the participants' ability to engage in battles both at a discursive and material level reflects their strategic competence.

7.2 The Role of the Discursive and Material in Action/Agency

As noted above, agency has been understood as entailing struggles or 'battles' that occur within fields with words like constraints, enablements, concessions and compromises (see for instance Archer 1995; Bhaskar 1998; Giddens 1979; Hay 2002; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Cohen 1989; Tucker 1998) typically being used to describe what happens during the process of social reproduction or transformation. These descriptions emphasise the struggles that occur during the process of social reproduction or transformation. They also highlight the fact that such processes have both material and discursive dimensions. The participants frequently alluded to the conflicts and struggles that take place in the university during social interactions and how individuals have to engage in these battles when they try to change social structures. For some agents, taking action that aims at changing structures, cultures and practices means engaging in battles which are discursive. The capacity to engage in these discursive struggles or battles can be seen as one dimension of agency. These battles are often, as James mentioned, 'below the surface' because in a professional social place like the university which is characterised by a contestation of ideas, people struggle for positions on the basis of arguments, ideas and counter ideas, debates and intellectual exchange and agents have to work at this level of discursive contestation to bring about change. Moreover, agents need not engage in battles exclusively to bring about change; actors may also engage in struggles to maintain/reproduce the structure of social relations. While the focus of this chapter is on struggles that unfold in the course of trying to transform existing relations and practices, I also discuss strategies and struggles aimed at reproduction and perpetuation of the existing ways, in order to highlight the significance of struggles aimed at transforming.

These discursive contestations I argue have material effects. This chapter also describes the material effects of discourses — that is, how individuals are materially produced by discursive strategies and how agents take up various positions in response to discursive contestations. It also highlights how participants' agency is revealed in their engagement in battles and conflicts to bring about change in the structure of social relations. Battles reveal the ways in which individuals take up positions (discursive and material) in response to constraints and enablements arising from a given set of social structures. The chapter examines how historical contexts and social relations create conditions for conflict, for instance how the history of apartheid and its current legacies led participants to take up certain positions and engage in battles in particular ways. Discourses also have material effects (see Barad 2007, 151; Frazier 2013, 364) which agents also have to contend materially with. While I examine the discursive nature of taking action to effect change, I also focus on the material aspects

— that is, the various battles or physical actions and reactions to and from participants as they took action towards change. While the discursive and material are intertwined as they produce and are sustained by each other, it is important to separate discursive and material explanations as they are not reducible to each other (see Barad 2007).

If conflicts occur in a social setting during relations or interactions, when an agent takes actions towards change, s/he may have to engage in specific kinds of battles or struggles to achieve a goal or defend a position. These struggles can be discursive — where the agent has to work at the discursive level to effect change. They can also be material — where the agent experiences physical/material constraints and has to engage in physical actions in order to defend their positions or interests. Barad writes:

> Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in a relationship of externality to each other; rather, the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamics of intra-activity. The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither is reducible to the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other. Neither is articulable in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated (Barad 2007: 152).

Barad makes an important point here in that she highlights the significance of both acknowledging and separating the discursive and the material (see also Jackson and Mazzei 2012; Vincent 2015). This argument informed my separation of the discursive-ness of agency and the material-ness of agency. Discursive in the sense of how structures resist or maintain themselves discursively and agents in turn have to work discursively to counter them and change those discourses. Material in the sense of the actual and concrete manifestations of discourses and how structures maintain themselves materially and agents have to also work at the material level by engaging in battles to effect change. Academia and life in the university for the most part is intellectual and more often than not we work with ideas and discourses, especially in the social sciences and humanities. Thus the struggles and conflicts that occur often occur at a discursive level and individuals engage at such levels. However discourses do not just have material manifestations i.e. in the bodies of individuals (Barad 2007, 151), there are also actual material conditions that individuals have to engage materially in. The implication of this for agency theory is that agency is both material and discursive: it implies the ability of the individual or group who wish to be agents of change, to work at both levels to effect change. Agency is tied to specific fields and contexts which create the conditions for actions both of a discursive and

material nature to be taken. Vincent (2015, 35) argues that transformation is only possible if we engage with concrete material manifestations of 'cultural practices, identities and subjectivities'. If university cultures, structures and practices are maintained or reproduced both discursively and materially, to transform them, we have to engage both materially and discursively.

In the next section, I use Bourdieu's concept of the field to position the university as a site of struggle both for the transformation and reproduction of the structure of social relations. I then describe what occurs within the field; and I position the spaces within the field (university) as 'fractured'. This enables an understanding of the nuanced forms of struggle that occur within the field. Positioning the university as a conflicting field with fractured spaces thus enables an understanding of the actions (both discursive and material) undertaken by agents/actors within the field.

7.3 Universities as sites of conflicts

> …when I first came here one of the things that was very apparent to me was that there was enormous conflict amongst the staff towards each other, there was a group of people who were very much committed towards academic research and academic identity and I saw that that's quite removed from, even though they saw themselves as progressive, they did not see themselves as engaging directly with the social environment. On the other hand, there was a group of people who … were more politically involved and these two groups were very much at loggerheads with each other, they spent all their time fighting with each other. As a result the department was to a large extent in chaos (Tracy).

As Tracy's story portrays, the university is a site of struggle whether for change or reproduction, and it is essentially this that leads to conflicts and battles between those who want to change the existing structures, cultures and practices and those who want to maintain things as they are. Bourdieu argues that practices or action occur in the structured arenas of conflicts which he describes as fields (Swartz 1997, 9). In such arenas of conflicts, individuals take specific forms of actions that have both discursive and material dimensions to achieve their goal of social change. While the university can be seen as a site through which dominant discourses become legitimised and agents of change have to work at the discursive levels to make a difference or change the system, they also have to engage in specific physical practices, which arise from conflicts and struggles within the university. As Tracy notes, these conflicts arise as a result of the different interests and ideologies occupying the university. This is evident in Max and Carol's narratives which highlight the ways in which the field creates the conditions for conflict.

> …but my experience previously had been that any attempt to privilege teaching in the sense that academics were required to pay more attention to teaching, where paying attention to teaching could be seen to take time away from research, that just got flattened, absolutely flattened and teaching was considered to be a sort of inferior activity (Carol).

> You mustn't imagine that you can just wave a magic wand and all those structures and that context will just disappear, that's very dangerous thinking. No, structures also exist in order to shape certain actions, structures are not only constraining, structures also make possible certain kinds of actions and help to realise certain kinds of progressive changes and so on (Max).

As Carol notes because teaching has been defined as outside the confines of important university work or defined as unimportant or unequal to research, there is always a struggle when action is taken to privilege teaching. It is this delimitation that provides the condition for conflicts as those outside such limits and boundaries are pitted against those within the boundaries and what ensues are struggles, battles and conflicts to accumulate and monopolize resources or capital. And the ability to change or maintain the social relations within such fields is dependent on, or rather influenced by, successful strategic accumulation of such resources. As Max notes, these fields provide the condition for their reproduction and transformation and it is these conditions that provide the possibility for struggles.

The university can thus be described a field where discursive and material practices reproduce, maintain and transform structural and cultural relations. Fields, rather than denoting specific material structures as in university buildings or disciplinary fields, denotes a complex set of power relations among and between individuals within specific contexts (Swartz 1997, 120; see also Bourdieu and Johnson 1993, 163; Grenfell and James 2004, 510). It is within this field that agents act in response to the structural and cultural relations and practices that define the field. Conceptualising the university as a field enables an examination of the 'latent patterns of interest and struggle that shape the existence of these empirical realities' of participants taking action towards change (Swartz 1997, 119; see also, Bourdieu and Johnson 1993, 164; Thomson 2008, 79). So the concept of field allows for the examination of the ways in which interests and struggles shape the experiences of these agents of change and the ways in which agents respond to them (see Swartz 1997, 119). Fields define and delimit specific areas of 'production, circulation and appropriation of knowledge or status' (Swartz 1997, 117; Bourdieu and Johnson 1993, 164).

Bourdieu argues that factors like race, class, gender and sexuality are always mediated through the field and their operation differs depending on the specific fields (see Swartz 1997, 119). Hence, in order to effect change one has to understand how these social relations of class, race, status and gender, work within a particular field. It is this understanding that provides the possibility for taking action. However, sometimes these factors provide the conditions for conflict in a field where race, class and gender define social relations. As discussed in the previous chapter and noted by Thandi and Chris, in the field, the level of comfortability that people feel makes them want to reproduce or maintain the current social relations and it is this that gives rise to struggles and conflicts within the university.

> At this university White people are barriers to transformation because at a certain level they are comfortable with the jobs they have had for so long, how are we going to get around that, we are certainly going to have to think about it and we are going to have to just work around the racism, you are not going to un-convert them, that's the point, don't as a Black person ever believe White people are on your side full stop, they are never on your side, ever except the one or two, but generally when they smile at you, they do shit behind your back, they protect their own interests (Thandi).

> …there was just resistance, just resistance to change, people do not want things to be moved, people were just scared of change, they are very comfortable in their own little worlds and spaces, they don't want to be challenged (Chris).

An analysis of fields thus draws our attention to the social conditions of struggle that condition social and cultural transformation (see Swartz 1997, 119; Bourdieu and Johnson 1993, 164; Thomson 2008, 74). In this context, the history of apartheid, the effect of its legacies and the university being historically white shapes the specific struggles and battles that participants engage in (Wolpe 1995, 278). The implication of a context that has been set up to favour a specific race and gender is that there will be those who want to maintain the system, who are very comfortable with their jobs and positions and will always protect their interests as noted in the previous chapter. This condition of comfortability, brought on by a history which privileged Whites over Blacks, creates a condition for struggles and (racialised, sexualised and gendered) conflicts because when there is an attempt to change or take actions that detract from such comfortability or threaten interests, there will be resistance. Kathy tells the same story:

> I see that playing out racially in our society so powerfully at the moment where there are certain groups of White sectors of society, holding on to old ideas of identity and power and who feel very threatened by transformation and then there

> are people who have been historically disadvantaged who are grasping onto power and privilege because there is a fear that without that they aren't anything, they are less of the person or level of an organisation or less of an institution without the bling and the power and wealth, a kind of political weight, both of those for me are motivated by fear and these are counter to sustainable transformation (Kathy).

Kathy, in line with Thandi and Chris, notes the way in which comfortability often leads to resistance and conflicts within universities. She makes an important point about conflicts and struggles within fields — that these conflicts go beyond those who are comfortable, who feel threatened by 'new ideas', hence 'hold on to old ideas of identity and power' and those with new ideas who want to change and challenge the old way of doing things — to include those who, though they experience the system as frustrating, rather than seek to change it, try to attain the old power and privileges for themselves. Bourdieu describes these individuals as 'new entrants who attempt to gain access to the dominant positions in the field' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 98, 99; Swartz 1997, 125). In the South African context, these individuals try to succeed and replace those who occupy dominant positions, not because they want to change such positions or ideologies but because they 'fear' that without such powers or positions they will have nothing. If such powers are removed or changed then they are left with nothing. As Kathy notes this fear comes from being historically deprived of power as the 'historically disadvantaged' as she puts. Apartheid ensured that Black South Africans occupied subservient, powerless roles in order to maintain White domination (Reddy 2004). This has meant that in post-apartheid South Africa, those who previously occupied such roles will either want to replace those in power while leaving existing structures intact or will want to bring about more fundamental change.

The implication of this is that transformation, contrary to some beliefs, is not pursued only by those who experience the system as constraining as argued in the previous chapter. As noted in the previous chapter, scholars writing on agency and social change (see for instance Archer 1995, 91; Bhaskar 1998, 55; Bourdieu and Johnson 1993; Swartz 1997, 124) have argued that individuals who experience social conditions or relations as enabling tend to seek to reproduce them while those who experience the conditions as constraining tend to seek to transform them. The idea is that those in a position of power or those who have experienced and still experience the system as enabling will want to maintain or preserve the current power structures and those who experience it as limiting will want change. However, as Kathy notes, sometimes even those who experience the system as constraining or are deprived of power and comfortability may want to maintain and attain such power rather than change the structures that legitimise such powers. This also then says something about

those who do take actions that enable change: that their motivation/agency for action may not be necessarily be tied to constraints or powerlessness. If the conditions of constraints and enablement's provide the condition for different interpretation and patterns, then it is a possibility that those who experience relations as constraining may want to replace those who experience such relations as enabling, so that they themselves have that experience of enablement and comfortability — rather than wanting to replace the actual conditions that make such experiences constraining and enabling, they seek to occupy and benefit from such conditions themselves.

Bourdieu's concept of 'fields' denotes struggles of domination and resistance which are relationally linked (Swartz 1997, 121; Bourdieu and Johnson 1993, 164; Thomson 2008, 74). In the university field, there are three main groups that struggle: firstly, there are those who pursue conservation strategies, who do not take action because they feel comfortable with the way things are, they buy into the notion that 'if it ain't broken don't fix it' (see Badat 2014; Booi 2015). Booi (2015) argues that the idea of 'if it ain't broken don't fix it' can be seen as a narrative which delegitimises the idea of transforming while privileging and reproducing existing practices. Thus those who buy into such notions pursue strategies and actions that maintain and reproduce the social relations or structural relations. Then there are those who pursue 'succession strategies' whom as I have noted above do not want any real change but want access to power and comfortability within the existing structures. Finally there are those who want to change or transform social relations; they do this by pursuing 'subversion strategies' which involves challenging those dominant discourses, ideologies and powers that legitimise such relations. What is important is that these strategies are dialectically related -- they produce each other and at the same time produce the conditions for struggle, conflicts and battles. The implication of this is that when agents or actors take actions towards change, sometimes they have to engage in actual battles and conflicts. Agency is then tied to, or revealed in, the battles that these participants engaged in as they took action towards change.

Fractured spaces: Diverse and conflicting interests

> So when you come to the University, you are coming into a set of social relations, these are relations of class, they are relations of race, they are relations of gender, they are relations of, at some universities, ethnicity and so on and so on. This structure is not one in which relations are egalitarian. These are social relations that are not just benign and neutral, these are also social relations of domination, of privilege and reproduction of privilege and domination and subordination and so on. And these relations don't only exist, in general, they also exist between different

> parts of the institution, between those who are classified academics and those who are classified administrative and those who are classified as ground staff and so on, or support staff as we began to use this term (Max).

Individuals entering universities enter into various positions which partly determine their experiences. Positions can be seen as places, functions, rules, tasks, duties, statuses and rights in a given system (Bhasker 1998, 41). Individuals also take up a position from the vantage point of their own particular identity configuration — the interpretation of which is contextually determined. Thus, when we enter into the system we enter into various positions, for example, White, young lecturer, Black female professor. Archer (1995, 90) argues that these positions, while limiting, can confer certain privileges on the occupant. The history of South Africa has given rise to a variety of socially constructed positions determined by an intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality, and these positions come with different embedded interests. These positions and interests lead to different practices within social relations, and differing interests and experiences have the potential to give rise to conflicts within these setting. A combination of these differing positions, interests and resulting conflicts, makes the university a fractured space within which actors who are intent on bringing about change interact with actors whose interests and positioning differs from their own. The fracturing is in part a discursive fracturing — dominant and subordinated discourses reflect normalised power relations. The fracturing is also a material fracturing — concrete experiences of struggles and material manifestations of discourses. Agency for change, it follows, is in part involved with the interruption of dominant discourses and in part takes the form of material opposition to transformation. It may take the form for example of overt questioning not only of what may be said but who may say it, or more subtle forms of persuasion, argument, manipulation and alliance building.

Max notes that when one enters into this field, one enters into a set of relations of domination, privilege, oppression and subordination. Individuals also bring into this field with them different experiences, social backgrounds, identities and interests, some of which are celebrated and occupy the powerful centre of the university field and the others of which are denigrated and rendered marginal. As Max notes, the ways of the dominant are regarded as 'just natural' and therefore not in need of change. The expectation is that new arrivals will assimilate to the dominant culture rather than allowing their arrival to interrupt business-as-usual.

> Some social groups regarded this as just natural and, that there was no need to really change things. Of course, there's an assumption that everyone who's not part of the dominant culture, as it has been produced and co-produced over decades, must

> assimilate or must just find it within themselves to integrate even if they didn't like it (Max).

South African universities have been described as having cultures that are very intimidating and uncomfortable especially for those whom the system was not built to support (see Mabokela 2001; DoE 2008; Cassim 2006). The report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation for instanced highlighted the pervasiveness of discrimination in universities and the disjuncture between policy and practice (DoE 2008, 13). The report noted that on paper there seemed to be an understanding of the need for transformation, however the actual experience of discrimination (both on the part of staff and students) within universities told a different story (DoE 2008, 13). Mills (2008, 86) notes that fields are sites of struggle for power between dominant and marginalised groups. The notion of field allows for a description of universities as sites for struggle over power, where there are conflicting interests and struggles over resources. These interests become a powerful source of motivation to reproduce or maintain the social system (see Giddens 1979; Archer 1995; Callinicos 2004). The university can be described as fractured because the different positions and interests create different 'camps/fields' (the academic, the non-academic, the student, raced, classed, gendered and sexualised fields). These fields also have within them sub-fields that have vested interests embedded in their operation. Because of the fractured-ness of these fields, agents are constantly engaged in battles or struggles, to control resources and to change or maintain the structure. Thandi's narrative highlights the effects new arrivals have in an oppressive culture and the potential for conflicts that is created by such emergence.

> When people like myself emerge in these spaces, we look a certain way, and not because of us, it is because of the culture, it is not because I am saying anything out of the ordinary surely, to say that we need a more equitable society is not that strange, it is because people like me aren't the norm here, that's the problem (Thandi).

Nirmal Puwar (2004, 8) argues that, 'social spaces are not blank and open for anybody to occupy, there is a connection between body and space, which is built, repeated and contested over time'. She further argues that while some bodies are seen as legitimate within these social systems, others are 'marked out as trespassers' (Puwar 2004, 8). Thus people like Thandi, a Black woman, 'continue to be located' as outsiders, because she is not the norm and is seen as not having the right to occupy that space, she is constructed as different and as a result of this her voice is constructed as strange (Puwar 2004, 8). The sheer whiteness of the institution is being altered by her presence, hence her

construction as different and 'out of place'. Not being the somatic norm, Thandi becomes what Puwar calls a 'space invader' (Puwar 2004, 8), or, as Inga puts it, from her experience, a 'trespasser':

> …when the Black Students Association movement showed pictures to demonstrate what they were talking about and saying things, I almost got a feeling they are verbalising my thoughts of what I have lived here with in 12 years. Where at every point I have been given a feeling I am a trespasser rather than a colleague (Inga).

Although there is no formal restriction on speaking in the various fora of the university — whether in faculty meetings, department meetings, committees, the Senate or Council — not everyone feels equally 'permitted' to speak. To fight discursively and materially, is to enter a terrain of battle that is already moulded by the structures of the past which render some voices, some ways of speaking and some ideas, illegitimate and therefore more difficult to voice — while if one speaks the dominant ideas and particularly if one does so from an identity position that is the somatic norm, the speaker is more comfortably at one with the space and its prescriptions, expectations and restrictions. Puwar's (2004) concept of 'amplification' helps explain my argument. Puwar (2004) argues that when minority bodies enter into spaces that have not been created or reserved for them their voices and bodies become amplified because they are different to the norm. Dana speaks of how to be non-male in masculinised spaces is to be at a disadvantage when it comes to speaking out and exercising agency in places where decision-making happens.

> I do find that Faculty meetings or Senate meetings, I cannot speak in those spaces. I find them to be incredibly male spaces. I don't feel like I have a strong enough voice, I often don't feel like I have a right to be there and I find that incredibly intimidating. So you know there is that kind of tension as well, you know in terms of the kind of spaces and fora where kind of authority plays out are incredibly masculinised spaces, you know and if you look at who is in charge, who the deans are etc. you know that narrative is just confirmed and legitimised over and over again (Dana).

While historically white universities have made efforts to transform their complexion by actively recruiting Black students, academic staff members and administrators, Dana's narrative reveals the continued contestation between belonging and being an outsider — simply bringing into these universities people who have not historically been the somatic norm in these environments, particularly in positions of power and influence, is not the same thing as creating an environment of equality (Mabokela 2001; Stanley 2006). Cassim (2006, 429) for instance found that the prevailing atmosphere and dominant cultures of most universities especially regarding diversity and equity have been described by staff at these institutions as hostile, complacent and equity unfriendly. Thus, while

Dana occupies an academic position, she does so from an embodied identity and set of dispositions which render her a 'space invader' (Puwar 2004, 7). The masculinised nature of prevailing practices makes Dana feel like 'she does not have a right to be there'. This feeling of being part of and not quite belonging (Puwar 2004, 8) is a common thread in women's experience of academic institutions (Turner 2002; Mavin and Bryan 2002; Levine et. al. 2011, 755; Sanders, Willemsen and Millar 2009). Idahosa and Vincent (2014) for instance note that women in academia occupy the position of insider/outsider. They argue that while sometimes women in academia reveal 'powerful forms of agency', using their insider/outsider status as a resource to advance both their own interests and those of others, at other times they experience the 'brute impact of disadvantage and loss in all its guises' (Idahosa and Vincent 2014, 69). Also, Patricia Hill Collins (1986, 14) describes women in academia as 'outsiders within', —that is while women are seemingly on the inside and have been accepted within the University — they are however constantly placed on the margins of structures and practices as a result of the subtle relations of domination that oppress and exclude women. In Thandi's experience:

> I consider anything I say to be uncontroversial about transformation, I don't consider the things I say to be controversial, they are not controversial but they are loud in an institution where these discussions continue to be, one looks a certain way because the university is a certain way, not because I am trying to be a certain way. As many of my friends will tell you I am actually very conservative, it is just that the university is so White, that you look so Black. It is not because I am trying to be anything, I am not actually, I am a Black person, it is because the university generally is White (Thandi).

Puwar (2004, 39) argues that the presence of a different body in a White concentrated field is capable of inducing a state of ontological anxiety. This anxiety is revealed in the definition of Thandi's actions or words as controversial. As Thandi notes, it is because the university is a White dominated place that there is an uneasiness and she is thus constructed as controversial. The discursive constructions of things like race and gender produces a certain materialization of her body as controversial. What is revealed here is the tension and the struggle to transcend this material construction and take action towards change. Thandi's self-perception is that she is 'quiet and conservative' but being in an institution that experiences her as a space invader, her presence is amplified — as she puts it, she is 'loud' and seen as controversial which reveals the politics and struggle taking place within the field. As Thandi notes it is because she is defined as different by the discourses within the field that she is seen as controversial. When you take a step towards transformation, then you are seen as controversial. Kannen (2014, 54) argues that 'bodies constitute and are constituted by educational

spaces' — hence Thandi's actions are constituted as controversial by the field that she is operating in.

Thandi's narrative emphasises Archer's argument on the role played by structural conditioning in the creation of transformed or changed agents. In South Africa, as Thandi notes, it is because the structural and social conditions and practices are a certain way that she becomes constructed as a voice, as 'a certain way'. It could be argued that this is her response to an oppressive structure, where to be an agent of change means speaking out and constantly critiquing the social relations that enable marginalisation and exclusion within that context. Thandi becomes 'a voice' because as she notes, 'the institution is a certain way', it is so White that when one speaks out against repressive structures, the individual is constructed as loud. As Thandi notes, her responses are not controversial but she is positioned as controversial. Because of the lack of 'other voices' within the institution, her responses do not fit within the bounds of what is defined as 'normal' within the university. What is also significant in Thandi's narrative is her shift from a conservative person to an outspoken person. Her agency is tied to speaking out and 'becoming a voice' but in a complex way because the structure is also constructing her as louder, more radical, more outspoken than she really feels herself to be. She takes the position of becoming a voice in order to defend her position and beliefs and to help those who she sees as 'breaking down' as she says elsewhere.

Lightfoot, Martinez and Schiff (1998, 201) assert that in the process of cultural contact people will reconstitute and reinterpret practices to best suit their interests. The fact that there are different bodies within the university also means that there are different individuals with different ideas, needs, wants and interests as noted earlier. We are differentially positioned within the system in terms of our race, class and gender — placements we have nothing to do with and for the most part, can do nothing about (Archer 1995; New 1994). By virtue of such positions, we are endowed with different interests, wants and needs which more often than not are conflicting and to an extent determine our actions in that they make the individual want to either maintain or reproduce the given structures that they encounter (Archer 1995, 205). Thus, the interests of a Black working class woman will be different from that of a White working class woman. In the university context especially, as a historically white context which has served a particular race, gender and class for a long time, change is difficult because those with vested interests may want to reproduce or maintain them. Structures can be described as the 'rules of the game' that prevail in any particular setting, and which reflect the different modes of power in operation and the ways in which they construct the life of both staff and students, shaping

choices and possibilities for what is and is not thinkable in any particular moment. The existence of apartheid legacies moreover means that these rules, practices and modes of power are raced, gendered and classed. Hence, for transformation to occur, it has been argued that universities will have to develop a new set of rules that will inform academic life in ways that accommodate and incorporate the diverse experiences of individuals in the university rather than being a reflection of the dominance of a particular worldview (Hemson and Singh 2010). To engage in discursive or material battles, is to fight in a field where the different positions including race, gender and class of individuals endow them with interests which are at times in direct opposition to each other. Because these interests are in opposition, individuals' interactions result in conflicts. Thus, to operate in a fractured field is to be in a space where there are different and conflicting interests, competing ideas, and individuals acting to reproduce, maintain or overturn existing practices.

James describes how difficult it is to make manifest, in this environment, the ideas that he has in his head because his ideas are not the same as the ideas that are in the heads of his colleagues. His experience is that he is never 'quite right' — either too authoritarian or not authoritarian enough — he must fight continually for the legitimacy of his way of being which is not the way of the normative masculinised prescriptions that he encounters.

> Yeah, I feel like it is like herding cats. I feel like I was forced into this relationship kicking and screaming. Some people find me too authoritarian and others not authoritarian enough. For some I do not lay down the line. For other people I don't control things tightly enough. So in other words, it is very difficult, we have got different styles…I am trying to effect a particular thing I have got an idea in my head, that is not the same idea that is in the heads of my colleagues, you can see how difficult it is (James).

Similarly, West, experiences himself as the 'odd guy' in his department which makes life 'not easy' for him in his quest to change the culture of his department so that it becomes more possible to achieve the significant transformation goal of retaining more students from township schools[19].

> But this is again hard because you know I am the odd guy within my department, so it becomes not easy. What I am saying is that it is hard as well, now I have younger colleagues that are kind of supporting me, but half of the department actually is not really interested in that, and in fact, they might be changing the

[19] This is particularly important in this university as only a small number of students from the immediate community are retained.

> curriculum or staff but it becomes more difficult to retain students from township schools, it becomes more difficult, you know so that is the thing (West).

Scholars writing on agency and structures argue that they cannot operate outside one another. Structures provide the necessary condition for human action and human action is a necessary condition for the existence and perpetuation of structures, such that agents cannot act without drawing upon structural properties whose existence depends upon their usage by agents (Bhaskar 1998; Archer 1995). For Giddens, structures are the 'unacknowledged conditions and unanticipated consequences of human action' (Giddens 1979, 69-70). What this conception of structure and agency suggests is the need to focus on individuals' involvement and interaction within the university context and the implication of this involvement for their ability to exercise agency (see Archer 1995; Giddens 1979; 1984; Callinicos 2004; Coole 2005; De Jaegher and Froese 2009; McHugh 2012). Institutional culture exists at the level of both the material and the discursive — the argument I make is that it follows that existing cultures are sustained both materially and discursively and therefore to transform such cultures one must fight both material and discursive battles. I discuss below the discursive and material battles participants talked about having engaged in when taking actions aimed at transformation — acknowledging all the while that while discussed discretely here these dimensions of agency are intertwined.

7.4 Fighting in the Discursive Space

> Well, I'd say that you have to win, you have to fight in the discursive space…So then there were other battles to fight around how you can configure those programmes, yeah because knowing which battles to fight in different ways within a broad set of parameters and they will either be more or less in the way they contribute to transformation (Carol).

In the academic context, often, winning battles means winning arguments — the 'fight', as Carol points out, often plays itself out 'in the discursive space'. To be an agent then is to put forward your preferred configuration and have it accepted. As Carol points out, in any given situation, such preferred configurations — for instance of a course or programme — might be more or less transformative and how far-reaching the outcome of a decision is will depend on which proposal wins the day. The focus of this section is on how structures are reproduced and interrupted/changed at the discursive level. Who has agency — that is to say, whose preferred configuration succeeds — will be an outcome of a discursive struggle between the ideas and interests of agents putting forward

transformative proposals and the ideas and interests that seek to counter them and to maintain the status quo.

> So I presented this thing to the Department, about four years ago, this idea for a kind of divorce and all hell broke loose, I mean I was basically pounced on by everybody and it was blood on the floor, so I was just told to go back to my cave, how dare you suggest this, it was very interesting. It was a devastating experience actually, because a couple of senior academics really had a go at me, how dare you bring this idea to this forum, so on that day, I had no agency, I had not built the strategic partnerships. Well I had, I thought I had, I had spoken to people in small groups and all of these people all agreed with me but they did not say anything, so the subalterns did not speak on that day to support what I was saying, nobody stood up for what I was saying, which was quite a shock to me, I thought I had people's support and I did before and after but on that day [laughs] I was on my own, so it was quite shocking….but it is fine I think there is enough space here for us all to proceed with our own ideas and actually, in my case the person who was going to block me went on sabbatical so that helped [laughs]. So I managed to win the argument while she wasn't here (James).

Existing literature has noted the difficulty with instituting change in universities, especially historically white universities. Universities, like all institutions, tend towards the maintenance and reproduction of existing structures and cultures. Hemson and Singh (2010, 937) note that these settings have very powerful modes of operation that shape and construct choices and possibilities and what is regarded as legitimate and illegitimate. For James, this meant that an attempt to introduce a new mode of operation in his department was met with vigorous resistance by those in power. But it is also met with silencing effects on the part of those whom he describes as the 'subalterns' and who seem to side with him in private but do not see themselves as legitimately having the right to speak out publicly. Foucault has argued that:

> …regimes of power which are constituted by discursive formations, define what counts as meaningful utterances, what topics are to be investigated and regimes of knowledge define who does and who does not have the intellectual authority to decide issues, how information should be gathered about who and by who, and the like (Bevir 1999, 66; see also Foucault 1997; 1978; 1980).

James suggests a form of change which, in the existing paradigm of his department, is unthinkable. Not only is the content of what he has to say questioned, but his right to speak on such matters at all is questioned. The result is experienced by James as violent — he is 'pounced' on and there is 'blood

on the floor'. Senior academics 'have a go' at him. The regimes of power and knowledge discount his actions and delegitimise his authority to speak at all.

James' narrative portrays the resistance that an agent of change may face when attempting to catalyse social change. Numerous scholars (see for instance Cassim 2006; Howell and Lazarus 2003) have noted the rigidity of South African university structures and how this rigidity leads to heightened resistance to change. As Archer (1995) argues, structures can be either/both enabling and limiting, but for the most part due to their rigid nature they tend mostly towards reproduction rather than transformation. One way in which this rigidness and resistance to change expresses itself is by challenging the legitimacy of an agent's idea, and the right of an agent to speak such ideas. Hence because James' idea is different from the norm, it is untenable, as he puts it, he is told to 'return to his cave'. Resistance is heightened when a person attempts to be an agent of far-reaching, structural, rather than superficial change. As Portnoi (2009) notes, there is always a severe backlash when there is an attempt to interrupt the 'way things are', therefore change remains at a superficial level. Given this rigidness and resistance that agents of change tend to encounter, their ability to take the kind of action that may lead to a change in the 'rules of the game' is dependent on their ability to win the kind of bruising encounters James describes. As James notes, these battles may be very subtle and are often going on under the surface. Krause (2011, 208) argues that, 'what we can accomplish depends significantly on how others interpret it'. In this instance, James is unable to accomplish his goals because those in power are able to dismiss his suggestions as inappropriate — so outside of the acceptable norms of conduct that he should not have 'dared' to bring them up. He is only able to 'win the argument' once the role players' change and therefore the rules of engagement shift and what he may and may not dare to utter, alters.

Embedded in all societal institutions, not least universities, are discourses that tend to make powerful certain ways of being while marginalising others. Scholars writing on the relationship between structures and agency refer to this as the 'causal power of social structures' (see Bhaskar 1998; Archer 1995). Structures are for the most part limiting -- they tend towards their own reproduction. But they also possess enabling properties (see for instance Elder-Vass 2010; Hay and Wincott 1998; Sibeon 1999; Battilana 2006; Porpora 1989; Connolly and Dolan 2012; McFadden 1995; Wilson 2008). The practices and processes that constitute the structural relations of a university engage power/knowledge strategies that are able to render as 'legitimate' those practices and processes that allow for the maintenance or reproduction of a certain structure. Individuals whose practices and

knowledges reflect the existing structure are able to delegitimise attempts to transform structures (see Bevir 1999). James' account is foregrounded here because it illustrates how ongoing battles play themselves out within the university between those who want to maintain/reproduce its existing practices cultures and ways of being (and, by implication, their own position of dominance and privilege which is made possible by the existing structure), and those who want to transform such structures. James' account shows too how these battles have a significant discursive element — an essential aspect of having the agency to effect transformation of university practices and cultures is having the ability to 'win the argument' and get one's ideas through. Equally, a significant dimension of resistance to change operates at the level of the discursive — if an idea can be classified absurd, illegitimate and unthinkable or unsayable, then it does not have to be engaged with and this form of discursive violence which James describes is a significant instrument for the maintenance of the status quo. When fighting in the discursive space, agents are engaged in struggles that seek to interrupt or challenge dominant discourses/normative assumptions. Often this form of agency might be engaged in at the subtle level of persuasion and negotiation.

Change is challenging and the rigidness of existing structures often makes it difficult for individuals to act as agents of change and to make choices which might be termed 'transformatory' because they interrupt the rules of the game in some way and bring about new practices, epistemologies and ways of being, thus calling into question the old ways, practices and cultures. To be an agent is to do something different, to interrupt/challenge the dominant way of being and the discourses, norms and attitudes that allow for maintaining and reproducing dominant/oppressive structures.

When agents interrupt or challenge dominant discourses, they expose the politics built into these discourses and norms and try to introduce new ones. This form of agency resists the normalising effects of power (Bevir 1999, 75). For Max interrupting or challenging the system meant trying to interrupt the notion of the university being a 'home for all'. It meant challenging individuals and discourses that normalise or legitimise a 'White discourse of comfortability' and getting those in power to realise that the space, the ways of being in that space, the practices, discourses, processes and ways of knowing were not comfortable for some.

> So, the idea of a home for all was never meant to be this kind of cosy place where we would all simply love each other and hug each other and so on. It was really far more complicated than that, but the idea generally was that Rhodes was not a place that was welcoming to everyone, in terms of people coming from different nationalities, or social classes, or so-called 'race' or sexual orientation, and

> backgrounds. The challenge was really to start recognising that this was a place where not everyone was comfortable, where lots of people were alienated and were feeling disempowered, and so the challenge of creating this as a home for all, was really about an invitation to all members of the university community to think very deeply about the kind of culture that was predominant (Max).

Scott (1990; 1985 in Silliman 2001, 195) argues that for the most part agents do not seek to actively revolutionise and usurp the powers of domination in their social setting though it may be their long term goal. Rather, they organise their daily lives around making such spaces their residence, which is what Max attempts to do, recognising that the space was unwelcoming and uncomfortable for some given the dominant culture, he encouraged questioning of existing practices, and the prevalent discourses, in the attempt to shift the culture to make it more welcoming for those who were seen as space invaders. For Carol, agency is reflected in the ability to challenge those dominant discourses that work to reproduce relations of domination and oppression within the university.

> But I would say we have been able to achieve what we achieved through challenging dominant discourses and having other people help us do that (Carol).

The notion of 'interrupting business as usual' reflects a struggle for the dislocation of dominant discourses (see McNay 2003, 148; Takhar 2011). When agents interrupt business as usual, their actions are sometimes not overt but may, rather, take subtle forms, challenging for instance 'White cultures' by questioning and making visible the effect of dominant, taken-for-granted assumptions.

> …it is quite strongly colonial…the actual fact is you have to ask the question who does it work for, it is not just enough to say you know we have fantastic students … look at all the degrees they are doing, it works. In what sense does it work? And what are we doing? What are we not doing? We have to ask those questions…. I don't think I have been the sort of person that has [asked those questions] in order to maintain a collegial environment. Because my department, for example, is very White, very White. It is all White [laughs] and all our students are White and that I find an incredible source of irritation and I have never hid that from anyone, I have never hid the fact that that is problematic (Chris).

For Chris, challenging the system means 'asking questions' about whom the status quo is working for. Here Chris interacts with a powerful status-quo maintaining discourse that operates in an institution noted for its high academic standards which is the refrain that things are 'working' and therefore the idea of change is delegitimised. Chris challenges the 'we are fine, things are working' discourse by asking who things are working for. When interrupting business as usual, agents emphasise the arbitrariness and normalisation of these dominant discourses and ways of being to

engender social change, which is what Chris does when he asks, 'who does it work for? He also alludes to another powerful status-quo maintaining discourse which is that of collegiality whereby those who seek to interrupt or disrupt business-as-usual are constructed as breaking collegial ranks and rendering formerly pleasant working environments conflictual and tension-ridden. His decision not to hide his irritation is thus an act of resistance — he recognises that to raise such matters will be seen as an interruption of collegiality rather than a welcomed, principled standpoint.

Additionally, under Apartheid, education was meant to fulfil the ideological function of maintaining White domination and keeping Blacks subservient (Reddy 2004). As Thandi argued the university 'is a product of that history, it will always in many ways be like that', hence the need for an attitude of persistent questioning. The process of transformation is a highly contested process (between those who want to reproduce existing norms and relations and those who want to question and transform those norms and relations) and there will always be constraining conditions that agents need to negotiate — choosing to do so at times gently, as Chris suggests, and at times, more forcefully as Inga does when she breaks ranks with her department and seeks the intervention of senior management.

> …So, now the minute you, you start stagnating in your space and you remain stagnated there, there is no one who can assist you. So, you have to break that ceiling somewhere and get yourself out of that space and go into a different space where there is support to enable you. So the minute I take this out into the top management, what I get is support. So, the support is coming, but from different quarters (Inga).

What has commonly been referred to in the literature on women in work as the 'glass ceiling' (see for instance Bagilhole 1993) refers to the invisible barriers to women's advancement in the workplace which must be challenged and broken through if women are to achieve their full potential. Inga's reference to breaking the ceiling is indicative of agents having to fight as discourses create constraining conditions or ceilings that need to be broken for change to happen. It implies that there are invisible structural factors that limit or mitigate one's ability to take action and one has to fight to figuratively break the ceiling to achieve one's goals. Dana, similarly, referred to the need to actively reject cultures of whiteness as comfortable and 'normalised'. For Dana, the idea of 'giving offence' acts as a bulwark against change in the polite halls of academia which must be contested if the transformation agenda is be advanced.

> And often it is the people who are often very comfortable that are scared of offending and the time for that has stopped. If we really believe in transformation, we need to start making the people have been comfortable up until now feel a little bit uncomfortable in order for real transformation to happen you know…it seems to be a group of people and I am part of that group, I get called upon all the time, you know HR wants to have a diversity or equity meeting and I look at the list and it is always the same people and the last one, I emailed back and I said why are there no Black people on the list, you are wanting us to go on a workshop to talk about equity issues and there is like one or two Black people out of 12 and the rest, all the same, candidates, all the time and it is inevitably women and 80% of those are White women. And I also question that in terms of yeah, why aren't others being brought in. I mean I emailed the Vice Chancellor and I said what about this person and this person, you know because, I just think that, the circles become so set about who is talking about this and who knows about this, the circle has to widen so other peoples' voices can also come in or asked to come in or invited to come in (Dana).

Here Dana refers to the need to (discursively) discomfort those who have been rendered comfortable by the existing institutional cultures and practices. She refers also to the need to change who gets to speak — as she puts it, 'widening the circle of who is talking'. Dana's argument for widening the circle highlights something of significance to the transformation process. As she notes it is not enough that the University policies and practices are transformatory. If there is only a specific group of people involved in such process then there is little progress occurring. That is, transformation is not possible if the individuals involved in such processes are from the dominant group, even if it is possible for the dominant to be engaged in transformatory action, as argued in the previous chapter. The transformation of structures of social relations require the inclusion of the oppressed, we cannot speak for or act for an 'other' without their involvement.

Chris, similarly, refers to the way in which a dominant culture is 'comfortable' for some and how the disruption of normalised 'comfort' is central to creating an environment of questioning whose interests the dominant culture is serving.

> My fear is that Rhodes has an inertia of its own and it is an inertia that is founded on the kind of comfort, academics are very comfortable in their little spaces. It is a quaint village if you have got the money and you don't look in the direction of the East too much and you don't think too much about how people in this town are actually living, if you live on the bubble side of the town as I call it, the White bubble, this side of town, it is a very quaint place, you have been an academic here, you have got a reasonable salary, it is a very easy lifestyle and I don't think, I get the sense that a lot of academics don't want to move, don't want that to be

> challenged. They are comfortable in their little spaces, doing their little bit of work. Rhodes has a culture of people networking together very much, and is very difficult to get that inertia to change generally across the board and that is going to be a problem when it comes to significant moves and to transform higher education (Chris).

To act in order to change a culture implies one is aware of how the dominant culture is an unequal one as noted in the previous chapter. This awareness creates discomfort so that even if one might be benefitting from existing practices and one's position within those relations, one no longer feels comfortable because of an awareness that the benefit is unjust. To be an agent is to be uncomfortable, to want to challenge the dominant ways of doing and being. To be an agent is to remove oneself from what Chris terms the 'White bubble'. Such challenges are often discursive — operating as a questioning of the comfortable norms and assumptions that prevail in the institution. Because the discourses in these contexts and their effect are very subtle, the agent tries to reveal them by challenging, questioning and bringing to light their inner workings.

The conception of fighting in the discursive space as agents interrupting dominant discourses highlights the individual's capacity for choice (see Clegg 2006). Thandi makes the choice to interrupt the dominant narratives of White normativity as she says:

> …so I am very strong about how one should write for African children and how one should not treat African children as though they are different from other children, so that when you write stories we are writing stories that even if it is a child in the US, a White child in Norway, if they see this stuff, it is all about children. But to write in such a way and use illustration in such a way that it doesn't reinforce the idea of White normativity but without essentialising the Black child either. So you don't want to do these stories that are just about African pride and African sense, you want to do stories that affirm Black children without making them feel different from other children such that if White children read that they would also feel affirmed, it is a very clear philosophy that we have but it is very tricky to write that way. So part of my constant engagement with the project is about how to take African languages into a different space in the 21st century (Thandi).

Thandi is challenging the dominant forms of representation by producing an alternative narrative that does not reproduce White normativity or essentialise the Black child. Moreton-Robertson (2004, 75) argues that, 'whiteness establishes the limits of what can be known about the other through itself, disappearing beyond or behind the limits of this knowledge it creates in the other's name' (see also Green, Sonn and Matsebula 2007). Moreton-Robertson is referring to the strategies through which

whiteness normalises itself by positioning the other as an 'other'. If one of the ways in which whiteness maintains its dominance is by controlling knowledge production and defining the limits of knowledge production, telling stories or producing knowledge that affirms Black identities can be seen as a way of interrupting or challenging dominant norms and mis-representation of Blacks. Thandi does this by re-introducing what Foucault termed subjugated knowledges — knowledges dismissed as inadequate, naive and insufficient (Foucault 1980, 82).

Kathy referred to the power of individuals coming together as a group to challenge the status quo — for example in the case of an organisation created by some women in the institution as a 'safe space' for those who experience themselves as 'outsiders' to the university and the marginalised within the university.

> …you know to fight the power of a formal system on its own terms…set up a kind of polarised alienated dynamic space because the situation is already antagonistic. When conflict becomes appropriated by the powerful for the marginalised as a blunt instrument to beat someone else up with, that is when the transformation agenda goes haywire and people end up really badly hurt and lose a sense of the possibilities. So that sense of there being safe spaces and nurturing spaces where the battering and bruising can be processed and healed and you can gather strength to keep going through the challenges (Kathy).

As Kathy notes, this group was created to 'fight' power on its own terms. What is implied in the existence of the group is the conflicts that often occur within the university as the very presence of the group reveals the contestations within the University. The 'dynamic space' created by these groups is similar to what Foucault call 'heterotopic spaces'. Foucault defines these spaces as 'heterotopias' which function as counter-sites reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society, in a state of crisis (Foucault and Miskowec 1986, 24). These sites Foucault notes are present in all societies (Foucault and Miskowec 1986, 24). SFA represents the heterotopia of the institution, and this at the same time highlights the struggles and crises individuals within such institutions experience. These sites facilitate acts of resistance and transgression; they are like battle sites, full of smoke and confusion (Hetherington 1998, 132; see also Kannen 2014). Words like 'batterin'g, 'bruising' and 'challenged' used by Kathy speak to the level of violence experienced by actors within the institution and created places such as the SFA act as sources of nurturing and at the same time act as a counter site where the energy can be gathered to fight/engage the institution 'on its own terms'. Heterotopic sites challenge the social order and at the same time create conditions of possibility for new relations and terms of engagement (Hetherington 1998, 132). They are sites where the battered

and bruised on the university battlefield can be nurtured and their creation is in itself an important example of agency. To be an agent then, is to engage in these battles, despite the pain, hurt, battering and bruising that may result from these encounters. As is evident in Thandi, Chris, Dana, Inga, Carol, Kathy and Max's narratives, implied in being an agent of change is the capacity to challenge and interrupt discourses that reproduce the relations of domination within one's context.

7.5 The Materiality of struggles to transform

> I got involved in this dispute in the Council Chambers and people were sarcastic and as we walked out of the Chamber, we broke for tea, as we walked out of the Chamber some people rubbed my back and say, 'should we 'pull the knives out?', and you know that hurt, it hurt when people are being sarcastic and belittling you (Carol).

In this section I discuss the way in which discourses are produced materially as bodily experiences. This section also examines the way actors take up material (in the sense of concrete/actual) positions in response to discursive and material contestations in their context. Discourses also have material effects. What is perhaps important, and which comes through in Carol's narrative, is the way in which for women these aggressions frequently materialise as a felt bodily experience (see also Barad 2007, 151; Jackson and Mazzei 2012). Institutional settings such as the Council Chamber where Senate meetings are convened are settings in which it is the norm for aggressive debates to be conducted. Puwar highlights vocal attacks and overt conflicts as some of the performative norms and practices that occur within these zones and which some relish while others — often women — find very uncomfortable (Puwar 2004, 86). While Puwar highlights the violence that occurs within these Chambers, she notes that there is something distinctive when the body of a woman is inserted into what she describes as a 'political theatre' (Puwar 2004, 86). The bodies of women in these situations become visible in a way that those of men do not. Carol's female body is rendered hyper visible when she dares to enter into the aggressive forms of interchange that are the norm for men in the Council Chamber. If she were to refrain from entering the fray she would confirm her marginality and irrelevance. But when she does enter the fray she cannot help but do so as a woman and as a result she is the focus of sarcastic and humiliating attention which takes the form of attentiveness to her body which other members of the Senate feel the need to 'rub' — a response which is very difficult to imagine a male Senator's body being the subject of. Of particular importance is the way in which the discursive strategy of being sarcastic as a form resistance to new ideas, has an effect on her body.

What this reveals is the ways in which Carol's body is produced materially by discourses and practices within institutions.

The Senate which Carol speaks of is a predominantly White and male site and 22 years into democracy it remains a White and male dominated site. For example, in 2012, the Executive Senate committee comprised 18% Black men, which was similar to the representation of White women (18%), while 64% were White men with a total of 83% men (Rhodes University Committee Booklet 2012). As at 2015 there was no significant increase in the demographic proportions, 18% were Black men, 27% White women and 55% White men, with men comprising 73%, only a 10% decrease from 2012 (Rhodes University Committee Booklet 2015). While this highlights the slow pace at which transformation is occurring as highlighted by the report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation (DoE 2008) — it is significant that there were no Black females represented in the Executive Senate Committee both in 2012 and 2015. The implication of this is that the female and Black body is almost always constructed as outside in such places and this makes taking action or engaging within such territories risky and difficult for those whose presence is the exception rather than the norm. To be an agent of transformation implies the capacity of an actor to engage in battles and take action within conflicting fields that sometimes may not have been created for them and whose function is to silence them.

To be an agent is to engage in struggles and battles in order to effect transformation or change. Actions to effect transformation may take a discursive form as discussed above or may take the form of specific material actions. Similarly resistance to change may be either material or discursive (discussed further below) — or a combination of the two. Material battles have to do with the struggles that agents are engaged in within the university as they interact with other bodies in the field. These agents are materially constituted when they take action toward transformation — as much as agency operates at the level of the circulation of discourses and counter discourses, agents are also always material beings, bodies interacting in material, physical places. Moreover, the two are not discrete or easily separable in that discourses sometimes have material effects on actors and actors may respond materially to discourses. When participants directly engage in battles they inevitably are no longer standing at a distance; to enter the fray implies involvement (see Jackson and Mazzei 2012, 128). Inga narrates something similar:

> Where at every point I have been given a feeling I am a trespasser rather than a colleague. Literally, this is not a figure of speech, it happened two days ago, literally

> a door was shut when I was passing the corridor. It is not a figure of speech, it is not saying they keep shutting doors, NO. They knew I was going, because they were standing at the door talking to their colleague, bent and saw me coming and they shut the door as I passed, not before I passed, not after I passed. So, that is a space that you work in. Now, are you going to let that space take away your spirit and your abilities to contribute? Of course, you can't. Then what you do is you resign and leave, which is what 8 – 9 colleagues have already done. My spirit is beyond dirty politics. My spirit is beyond any card that can be thrown at my face because I'm not prepared to accept any of those cards. If it is not equality, I'm not listening to you, period (Inga).

Fields can be described as arenas where the struggle for legitimation takes places over the rights to exercise 'symbolic violence' (Swartz 1997, 125). They impose specific forms of struggles on actors within such fields. Shutting doors denotes a specific form of struggle which was imposed on Inga where she was constantly been made to feel like a trespasser. Young (1987 in Lewis 1993, 45) argues that 'the concrete materiality of our everyday experiences are mapped in real relations of power that shut us down/out/in as a function of our social place defined through our gender, our age and our sexual desires'. Understanding what an open door means helps understand the impact of shutting a door. The idea of an open door connotes access, equality and comfortability — an attitude of welcoming in the other. Turning this on its head, shutting doors thus connotes exclusion, inequality and an announcement that the other is unwelcome, an intruder. What is revealed here is a kind of violent practice that exists within institutions. Because the field of higher education has not defined physical or bodily violence as acceptable (Swartz 1997), it resorts to physical actions that sends a message of 'othering' and not being welcome — what Inga describes as 'dirty politics'. For Inga, fighting battles means 'not accepting' marginalising discourses and ways of being that prevent one from making choices and taking actions that may lead to change. Rather than resign, she chooses to stay and 'do what she has to do' to make a contribution. Lewis (1993, 49) argues for an understanding of silences of the oppressed as a 'counter language'[20] to dominant expressions and ways of being. She describes these silences as a 'full force opposition to what has been said before' (Lewis 1993, 49), which is what Inga has done. By choosing to give a blank face and choosing not to express her mind, she reveals her refusal of, and resistance to, oppressive structures and cultures. These silences Lewis (1993, 49) argues can be described as sites of struggle because they open up the possibility for competing meanings and new discourses and social relations. Therefore, it is important to understand women's silences in some instances as a 'source of active transformative practice' that reveal 'concrete and active engagements' within relations of domination (Lewis 1993, 3).

[20] Lewis1993 draws the word 'Counter Language' from Bonnie Smith 1981.

Of significance is the role played by Inga and Carol's bodies in such conflicts. Puwar (2004, 33) argues that 'notions of 'the look', 'terror' and the 'monstrous' help us to consider what is disturbed by the arrival or entry of 'new' kinds of bodies in professional occupations which are not historically and conceptually 'reserved' for them'. Inga's feeling of being a trespasser points to the pervasiveness of social relations within universities where bodies and ideas that contradict the norms are resisted or rejected. The Council Chamber is one example of a place/institution that is not historically and conceptually reserved for Carol or her ideas and she experiences this alienation corporeally. The arrival of Carol and Inga's bodies in a place like the Council Chamber, coupled with their 'new' actions and discourses aimed at transforming structural relations combine to create the effect of their being made to feel like trespassers. What is significant about Inga's narrative and which reveals her agency is her decision to stay and fight back, thus highlighting the struggle that agents engage in as they take on transformative activities. She thus resists the attempt to physically shut her out — refusing to react to being unwelcome by excluding herself.

Bourdieu notes that those who occupy dominant positions and those who challenge them share a common interest in preserving the field (Swartz 1997, 125). The implication of this is that whether the action taken is aimed as reproduction or transformation, both parties have vested interests in that institution or field. Inga's interest in changing the field is revealed in her decision to stay. While others, in the face of such conflict and resistance or 'dirty politics', have resigned and left, her choice was to stay and reject those 'cards' being thrown in her face, and she thereby lays claim to her belonging in the field. What is implied in her story is that she values her position in the field or university and the thus feels the need to stay and fight to make a difference rather than leave. She knows and understands and has accepted the worth of the field, hence the decision to fight to reformulate its relations even in the face of attempts to shut her out (see Swartz 1997, 124). Her agency is revealed in her insistence on remaining present despite doors being shut. Carol and Kathy described similar experiences:

> I remember one person who is now a professor, shouting at me, he was very rude because he had to produce evidence for his promotion. People have been rude to me in very public places like the Council Chamber.…I can remember on another occasion arguing somewhere and the man sitting next to me who was a friend, I stood up in Senate, I stood up once more and then as I finished speaking I sat down and he tugged me down and 'he said give up you are not going to win, it is my advice, give up you are not going to win' (Carol).

> I could list plenty of other examples and stories and moments of struggle but for me that is the thread that runs through and that is the pain I feel when I watch some of the issues that go down at the university where huge conflicts breakout, people end up very bruised, very battered (Kathy).

Sometimes these fights play out physically as Carol notes. Fields impose limits on what can and cannot be done within them, hence specific forms of struggle are legitimised whereas others are excluded (Thomson 2008, 69; Swartz 1997, 125). So when Carol stands up to engage and try to get her point of view through, she is physically 'tugged down'. To be an agent is to involve oneself in disputes even if 'you are not going to win'. Carol's colleague 'tugging her down' point to the kinds of battles one has to engage in within the field when trying to bring about change. It also highlights the ways in which, as noted earlier, the struggle is sometimes inscribed on the body. While the 'tug down' may seem like an attempt to protect her in a chivalrous fashion, it has the effect of confirming the power/dominance of the male who puts himself in a position of protection — although Carol has not asked for such protection. Also, revealed in Carol's story is the concept of amplification, in the male colleagues' ears, her voice was ringing loud and amplified that he felt the need to make it stop by 'tugging her down' and preventing her from speaking. Thus female voices continue to be silenced in masculine dominated spaces because their voices are constructed as loud. Puwar (2004, 49) argues that such visibility and amplification comes from the woman being outside the norm. As Kathy notes, even though these conflicts may play out discursively and materially, a common theme is bodily effects. Battles can be painful and bring about hurt for the individual who attempts to go against and subvert the norms and dominant discourses within the university.

A common thread in Inga, Kathy and Carol's observations is the way in which women's bodies become the centre stage for resistance to transformation. Grosz (1994, 14) argues that patriarchal oppression 'justifies itself, at least in part, by connecting women much more closely than men to the body'. Thus, women were seen as '*more* biological, *more* corporeal and *more* natural than men' (Grosz 1994, 14). The rubbing, tugging down, and the way in which their bodies are touched, is remarkable given the fact that men are not touched in the same way. While the men in the study spoke of obstacles and conflicts outside their bodies, for most of the women, their bodies were implicated in the struggle for transformation. Even more remarkable is that this occurs in a context which is purported to be a place for the free flow of ideas, neutrality and equality. Being rubbed or tugged down emphasises the notion that women's bodies are to be passive, thus needing to be silenced when they become active (see Buckley 1986). Because Carol is meant to occupy a passive role, her decision to take an active role and speak out is thus viewed as an imposition and she is tugged down. Orloff

(1993, 309) writes, "relations of domination based on control of women's bodies in the family, the workplace, and public spaces undermine women's abilities to participate as 'independent individuals' — citizens — in the polity, which in turn affects their capacities to demand and utilize social rights". The act of tugging or rubbing serves as a reminder of Carol's unnatural presence in a place reserved for men and she is prevented from participating as actively as she would want to.

Women's bodies have always been the object of power and control, and tugging and rubbing can be seen as a powerful means of controlling Carol's actions and reasserting male control. The effect of such power/knowledge strategies is the prevention of the woman from actively participating in the work sphere. Witz (2000, 11) argues that the woman exists 'in and only through her body'. This does not however mean that the male body does not exist -- it does, but it is rendered relatively obscure through strategies of normalisation. Thus, when there is resistance to transformation, it is mediated through the woman's body and because the male body has been rendered invisible, such acts of resistance are mediated through other means for instance verbally (see Witz 2000, 11). The male body then cannot be the subject or object of interaction because the power/knowledge strategies within the university renders the male/female body invisible or visible in specific situations. Thus, while Inga, Kathy and Carol's bodies in that masculinised space remain invisible, when they attempt to take actions that aim at altering the status quo, their bodies are used as a means of silencing and ensuring reproduction.

Agents thus have to find ways of responding to battles and conflicts experienced when they take actions aimed at transformation — what I call putting on suits of armour. Scholars (see for instance Puwar 2004) have argued that the identities of individuals are intertwined and inextricably linked to the fields in which they are located (see also Kannen 2014, 53). Suits-of-armour implies participants' responses to social relations within the university. Because structures provide the conditions for action and given the context of apartheid legacies, agents of change are often constructed in certain ways: more often than not they have to engage in battles and fights both at the discursive and material level. In response to this, sometimes agents become changed or take up positions to enable them take action. This may involve becoming brash, becoming like a steam roller, becoming 'a voice' or even having to 'fly the flag'. Archer writes that in the process of taking action not only do structures become transformed, agents also change or become transformed during relations within structural conditions and through social interaction (Archer 1995). Hence the responses of these individuals

reflect their agency and the transforming of structures. Dana invokes a military image: becoming the flag flier.

> Yah but the frustrations and the obstacles to that, are that I must fly the flag for that and it is being quite a, I have had to really find my voice within the staff, to say hang on. I think the downside of that is that it has been a very lonely space. Just been me doing it, I have had almost zero collaboration with anybody else in my department and that has just been very frustrating (Dana).

While structures may be immaterial (see Callinicos 2004, XXV; Hay 2002; Bhaskar 1998; Archer 1995), they produce material properties which are often inscribed on the bodies of individuals within such institutions. What Dana calls flying the flag, means taking on the mantel of the one who tries to change which, as she notes, puts her in a very 'lonely space'. Her acknowledgment of the department as lonely reveals the difficulty that many individuals face when taking actions aimed at changing pervasive structures. Bourdieu notes that these positions and strategies taken up by actors, cannot be divorced from their institutional positions (Naidoo 2004, 459). Hence for Dana she becomes the flag flier in her department. Giddens (1984, 84-85) notes that these positions taken up by individuals need not be actual physical positions, they can also be bodily movements and gestures. Hence the term fly the flag highlights a position taken by Dana as a response to the institutional practice of ignoring or not wanting to be part of the transformation agenda. In order to become the flag flier, she has to speak out and as the notes find her voice. This reveals her agency and at the same time her transformation as an agent resulting from her interaction with structures and cultures within the university. While for Dana engaging in battle meant becoming the flag flier, for Inga, it meant becoming resourceful and resilient in the face of setbacks.

> For 12 years nobody could stop me with anything that I've wanted to do. I have achieved what I wanted. It was always a struggle, it was always 20 plans that was put to rest, because it was forced upon me, but the 21st or the 29th or the 39th plan worked. But if I'd been given a space where I don't have to try 39 times to get to my goal and I could have gotten to my goal the very first time this place would have benefited more from me, but it was not my loss. I have become extraordinarily resourceful, because everything gets stopped (Inga).

For some agents, becoming resourceful is a response to the varying degrees of insults and attacks they encounter such as the 'shutting of doors'. As Inga notes, her response to her colleagues making her feel unwanted and the constant constraints she faced was to become 'extraordinarily resourceful' and finding alternative fields in which to take action because 'everything gets stopped'. Inga's narrative is perhaps paradigmatic of Archer's (1995, 11, 75) claim that agents become simultaneously

changed as they act within structures to effect change — as much as they are acting to change the structure they themselves are being transformed in the process. Rather than giving up in the face of constraints, Inga struggles and her successes are dependent on having numerous plans and always moving on to the next rather than being stopped and giving up.

To take action towards change in the university is to engage in battles which may be overt or subtle, in order to attain specific goals. Existing cultures and structures in institutions are maintained both materially and discursively (see Vincent 2015) and as Inga recounted, resistance to change may take very material forms such as the literal shutting of doors in the face of the perceived outsider — which can be described as a means through which structures maintain themselves materially. Similarly, agents of change may themselves also engage in material conflicts and battles as to counter such resistance to change. As Kathy puts it, 'if you attack me … I will attack you back':

> ….that is a concern for me because it speaks to violence being the first option…exclusion in the whole place, people shouting at me and I wasn't allowed to do this and that, how dare you do that and for some reason I don't think I really defused the situation, there were still people who refused to acknowledge me in the session. The biggest challenge we face is to make the institutions where we work fit for human habitation because there are power dynamics and conflicts that render our places of work almost unbearable at times… if you attack me I become afraid and I will attack you back and I think that is a small example of just how sensitive they are, how fearful we are of each other in our differences in an already adversarial and polarised space. But it is an example of what happens all the time, there is always a group who goes and fights back (Kathy).

For Kathy, this conflict played out in people shouting her down and refusing to acknowledge her. Kathy notes the role of violence in resistance especially to actions and ideas that oppose the dominant ideology and norm. Kathy further highlights the cycle of conflicts that play out in spaces where there is an attempt at transforming oppressive structures and cultures. The fact that any attempt at transformation of a dominant and oppressive relation will always be met by resistance, which may sometimes be violent, highlights the agency that has to be deployed to ensure such relations are transformed. While the university may seem to be a place where the free exchange of ideas is possible, it can also be an 'adversarial and polarised' place where being different or acting in a way that is counter to the dominant norm is met with violence. It is not just that conflicts occur within these places, but as Kathy notes, the power dynamics of such conflicts ensures that the university remains an unbearable place for those who are different or want to transform relations of domination. For Chris the violence is experienced as 'monstrous', 'in your face' and 'everywhere all the time' while

Natalie refers to a sense of being 'attacked'. The participants clearly experience themselves as embattled.

> ….there was a clear monster, the monster was there and he was very present and very obvious and very in-your-face everywhere all the time and for a very long time...it was really in-your-face and I had this giant fight with the whole University and the racism was connected to a certain sort of nepotism that had as its function to keep the purity so to speak of the place (Chris).

> …colleagues would kind of attack you or not support you if you wanted to do something that might lead to changes that they didn't like…I mean the only thing that I felt personally is that sometimes I felt that those kind of petty fights, although they are not really petty, that I was talking about, people don't want to include you in this because you are not radical enough (Natalie).

While Chris is speaking of his experience in a different university to the one under study, his narrative emphasises the conflictual nature of universities. To be an agent then is to take action despite being shouted at or in the face of attacks. It is to be willing to have 'giant fights'. Effecting change will often mean encountering resistance and this resistance may take both verbal and physical forms and will operate on a continuum of violence. Structures are resilient and resistant such that when new actions are taken in such structures, they are met with sometimes fierce reactions that attempt to prevent changes from occurring. Acting as agents for the preservation of structures, actors engage in a range of responses from the shutting of doors, to shouting, belittling, humiliation, patronising, to physically tugging someone down to prevent them from speaking. This array of responses that actors in the field take to preserve the existing structure makes the actions of those who insist on fighting for change all the more special as they push forward despite these very evident and material obstacles. For Thandi, responding meant struggling and juggling:

> So when you say success, it is strange because some of the things, one is constantly intervening in, cannot be measured as a success or failure, you just pray a colleague got through the situation or the student feels better about something, this kind of thing. So success is a very problematic term to try and use but I would rather just say, what makes one push through and try something to the end. Well if you don't push through and try and help someone to the end you will find somebody who is breaking down, so you have to do something, so things that are sort of tangible…I don't like to tag the concept of success to them because those are all struggles, those are all struggles in the making and unmaking of an institution of the nature of this university (Thandi).

Responding to battles can take the form of struggling and juggling things because in the university, taking action towards transformation has not been defined or deemed as a legitimate academic activity — thus it is not rewarded with promotion or affirmation. Hence for the most part participants have to struggle to keep up with those things that fall within the boundaries of academic activity while also taking actions aimed at transformation. For Thandi, this means that successes are seen in terms of struggles and a kind of constant intervention in the field.

Sometimes the agents' response to the constraints and the limitations they experience within social relations may lead them to adopt a tough stance in response to the constraints and conflicts. In response to the verbal and very personal attacks, some agents become brash and as John notes take the approach of a steamroller.

> There are a lot of narrow-minded academics in this department who do not understand that, they do not understand the research officers that are been employed, people with disabilities that are being employed, who are they, are they part of this department, are they not part of the department and so there have been some frustrations there yeah, but my approach is just to go ahead like a steamroller and it seems to work… What I did and this is probably a bit of a regret, I became brash, I became tough and I did it my way and so I realised who I could work with and who I couldn't work with and I worked with those people that I felt comfortable working with and I didn't with others (John).

Sometimes anger or becoming brash can be an appropriate response to the conditions of struggle within one's context. Lewis (1993, 67) writes, 'anger as an expression of transformed consciousness is an appropriate response to the condition of women'. While she speaks to the condition of women, her argument can be extended and applied to the condition of struggles that those who engage in transformative actions experience. Rather than reading John's response of becoming brash and going ahead like a steam roller as a lack of agency, his decision to take a tough stance can be understood as a deployment of his agency. What is significant about these stories is it speaks to agents transcending these limitations and constraints that they face — which makes the efforts they take special as it involves exploring different possibilities, it involves exploring alternative ways even if it means taking up aggressive positions. The experiences described by Thandi, Dana, Kathy and John imply a link between agency and exploring different possibilities in order to effect transformation. Archer (1995, 253) writes, 'weighers cannot be pre-programmed by nature or nurture, otherwise weights and measures would be standard across society and constant across individuals'. The different participants' responses to structural conditions points to the fact that humans cannot be wholly

determined by their context, while for some it may be limiting and for others it may be enabling, the way in which the individual responds is always mediated by personal properties.

It is however important to note that while not all battles are won, as James depicts, these battles nevertheless create the possibility for learning and becoming resourceful. Those actors who are willing to ignore the shutting of doors and other silencing strategies grow in strategic competence, which enhances their capacity for agency. Failures reflect the very material struggle or battles that agents of change experience within social structures, and as James notes, this does not necessarily imply negativity; sometimes failures can be positive.

> I am finding it difficult to understand my own failures. It is a difficult thing I mean, on one hand a part of why things fail is that universities are set up in a particular way. You know I think as for everything I failed a lot, Mmmh sometimes failing a lot is a good thing you learn and you develop. I think that over the years it developed and changed got better actually strategic alliances with organisations in Grahamstown developed. Staying with something for a long time…it develops value and as I said learning through your failures, picking up yourself…that is a barrier, but at the same time it is also a resource because as I said before, learning through failure, through difficulty is often a very good thing (James).

To be an agent does not always mean that the battles fought will be won. Sometimes, for an agent failure is seen as a learning process, they are able to understand what works and what does not work and this reflects agents who take actions to effect change because the process of learning and failing implies doing. James' narrative of failing depicts an individual engaged with the constraints of the structural conditions in his context. Agents are not always able to overcome the constraining conditions they encounter. But for James, failure is described not as a constraint but as an opportunity to develop and better understand the ways in which the system or university works. With his failures, he better understands the system and knows what works and what does not work and over time he is able to build strategic alliances that put him in a better position to successfully engage in battles to overcome constraining conditions. This resilience also comes through for example in Inga's account of her refusal to respond to being shut out by leaving the institution as so many others have done. Thus, fortitude in the face of failure or a never-say-die attitude to failure appears to be a significant feature in the personal make up of those who are able to be agents of change even under difficult, resistant circumstances. This points to one of a range of capabilities that agents who go to battle and succeed must have. I discuss these — which I refer to as 'strategic competencies' — in more detail in the section that follows.

7.6 Strategic competence

Hay (2002, 127) describes social relations as the interaction between strategic actors and strategic contexts. What is required to win battles, whether material or discursive, is strategic competence where the agent, using both personal and structural powers, devises means of achieving her goal(s). Agents have to be strategic if they are to be able to respond to prevailing structural conditions and take action successfully whether discursively and/or materially. While agency is often defined as 'doing' or action oriented, I argue that the ability of an agent to 'do' or take actions that may be deemed transformative in the university context is largely dependent on their ability to 'fight in the discursive and material' space, to win arguments and persuade others. Given that individuals have different interests, access to resources and positions, the university is an institutional context that consists of different enabling and limiting conditions within which agents must devise ways of achieving their goals. Universities can be understood as fractured spaces: spaces where a diversity of interests leads to conflicts between those who want to maintain existing cultures and practices — and have an interest in doing so — and those who want transformation. The agent/actor then has to find a way of negotiating this terrain of ongoing conflicts. Thus, when taking action, agents are in one way or another participants in, or implicated in, ongoing battles and must engage context-specific strategies to achieve their goals — and successful agents are those who possess strategic competence. Agents learn strategic competence through their experience during interactions in the social system. As West describes here, sometimes agents make 'strategic blunders' — not succeeding in achieving their goals, not because of being afraid to act but because of not making the right strategic choice about where to channel their energy. West's account speaks to the fact that agents have limited personal resources and must make good strategic choices about how to use those resources if they are to achieve an outcome which they regard as optimally 'transformative'.

> …because there is politics involved, I might back off from taking a decision. Well yes in one case, I did not realise how critical what was happening was in terms of trying to cut down the inclusion of the new demographics and I let a battle go that if I had gone in with my full weight and not been distracted by things that were happening at the moment — if I had understood how critical that was, we would probably be in a better position now. But that is again a strategic blunder if you like. I thought things could fix themselves more easily than they proved to and I thought I could rely on somebody and it turned out that I could not rely on this someone. But it is not that I decided not to act because I was afraid of this and that but I

> seemed to not realise what repercussions losing the battle would have had and I did not put enough energy into that battle at the beginning (West).
>
> The 'where leaders learn' course that every student would have had to take is the one I should have been much more assertive about. That's the one that I should have really fought, in terms of trying to persuade my colleagues, not at the leadership level, that's not where the issue got stuck, but at the middle levels of Rhodes, why this was so important. I should have paid far more attention to driving this program and really persuading colleagues and also rebutting the rejections and saying that they were trivial (Max).

As West acknowledged, had he been able to recognise where to place the emphasis of his efforts more strategically, and to make a more accurate assessment of who his allies were, his department would 'be in a better position' with respect to transformation than it is now. West alludes to the importance of allies: in a battle one has allies and enemies, you have to make decisions about which battles to fight with your full force and which to let go, and your strategic assessment of the state of your alliances will be an important determinant of the outcome. Max further highlights the role played by strategy, specifically knowing when to persuade and drive one's ideas to enable transformation. West and Max's narratives highlight the link between battles which occur during the process of transformation and the need for actors who want to transform relations of domination to be strategically competent. Evident in West and Max's stories are three arguments -- first the fact that any action aimed at transforming the status quo will always be met by resistance and sometimes violence. Second, in such situations agents of transformation have to fight, be more assertive as Max notes and engage in battles as West notes to get their ideas through. Finally, in order to get their ideas through, they have to be strategically competent; understand how critical the situation is, rebut rejections and persuade others to see or accept their ideas. To be strategically competent is to know when to drive our ideas, to know when to be assertive, to know when to put our energy into battles, to know when to fight and when not to.

It must however be noted that strategic competence is not only displayed by agents of transformation, there is a degree of strategy implied in the reproduction of relations of domination as well — this is evident in Max and West's narratives. As noted previously, Archer (1995, 152) argues that reproduction is rooted in the vested interests of groups who want to maintain structures that are enabling or that provide favourable conditions for them. When you do something that is different to the norm, you are going to encounter resistance. While an agent tries to interrupt norms, most of the time they are met with resistance of different kinds. In an academic setting, resistance often operates

at the level of drawing on normalising prescriptions to refuse ideas about change and in this way the structure is able to reproduce itself (Bevir 1999, 73). Chris for example spoke about encountering 'an enormous amount of resistance' when he tried to do 'something different'.

> I have noticed with other things that I have tried to do, there have been enormous amount of resistance if you are trying to do something different, you are going to find an enormous amount of resistance. Resistance comes in a kind of intellectual form, [making it] sound like it is an academic debate but in fact I understand that it is in a way a form of gatekeeping… I am proposing one idea and there is an opposition to that idea, there are financial issues, there are staffing issues. Resistance wouldn't come from an explicit place, it will come from … well I don't like your idea, your idea is dangerous, this is bad, intellectually speaking, this is not a good idea. You see so it takes that sort of shape, it doesn't take the more sort of overt shape (Chris)

Chris here alludes to the fact that strategies to resist change in any particular setting will be based on a strategic knowledge, on the part of actors in the setting, of the dominant norms of that setting. In the academic setting, there is no more powerful discursive device than to dismiss someone's idea as intellectually weak. So rather than saying, 'I am against change because I feel my position is being threatened or I feel discomforted', resistance takes the form of, 'your idea is simply not a good one'. Actors who deploy this strategy are strategically competent because in an academic setting to undermine someone intellectually is very powerful.

Max described a slightly different strategy in which a transformation agenda is undermined by those in power who, instead of using their intellect to *overcome* challenges, document the hurdles in minute detail.

> One kind of response was where in the timetable is this going to fit? The second kind of response was we don't like to impose any curriculum on students, which is not true because you have to undertake a first year curriculum before a second year curriculum. So, you do impose a certain curriculum structure for good reasons. It is not a marketplace where you can start with third year courses and then finish with first year courses. So, that was a silly response. Then there were real issues around where would the staff come from …. So, the point is that all kinds of, sometimes trivial and sometimes not trivial issues were raised, but certainly not insurmountable issues if you really wanted to put your head around this (Max).

The strategy of pointing to all the obstacles has the effect of undermining the agent of change as someone who has just not thought through things properly. As Dana makes clear, intellectualisation

is a strategy of power — and many times it is a strategy which is invoked when someone is in fear, for instance fear of losing influence or privilege or of feeling discomforted.

> I know it is difficult but yeah we can't do it through intellectualising it, we have to get real about what we feel, and hear what we feel about each other and hear about our fears because all of this is based on fear and how we protect ourselves from fear in academia is to intellectualise it. So it just becomes this vicious circle (Dana).

Resistance that takes this form is not necessarily or always of the intentional kind — reproduction of the system may be an unintended consequence of an agent expressing genuinely felt concerns for instance about logistics or bureaucratic procedures which has the effect of unwittingly perpetuating dominant norms. When things are taken for granted, by definition, they are hard to perceive. It is only through close analysis and questioning by agents of change that the norm becomes visible and therefore rendered available for change.

The literature on transformation in South Africa notes that sometimes discourses of 'excellence' and 'best' are used by universities to ensure reproduction by selecting those individuals and forms of knowledge that fit the norm (see Badat 2015; Portnoi 2009). This type of resistance is often difficult to locate/recognise because it is subsumed within 'legitimate discourses of no or why not'. So when an objection like 'your idea is dangerous' or 'we do not like to impose any curriculum on students' is brought up, it is very difficult to see/realise that the unintentional consequence of taking that course of action will be a reproduction of the structure while the aim is to be inclusive. When such objections are brought up, even though the goal is not to reproduce dominant structures, the work such objections does is to maintain or reproduce the structure. Hence, individuals that resist intellectually, though not necessarily intentionally, can be described as agents of reproduction/morphostasis. Often agents of transformation are faced with this problem in the university, when, why something should not be done or a particular course of action should not be taken is emphasised[21].

Some of these strategies used to resist intellectually include for example the 'excellence discourse versus diversity/Africanisation' where many have argued against changing what we teach in order to maintain the University's excellence (Badat 2015). While this kind of argument may be seen as a legitimate one, it can also be described as one of the strategies for resisting transformation. Discourses of 'excellence', and 'best fit' serve as foils for race used to select those who will prove least disruptive

[21] This does not mean that all ideas brought up by a knower is always brilliant. My point is that sometimes the process of objecting to a suggestion or resisting an action facilitates the reproduction of relation of domination.

to the prevailing norms (Badat 2015; Portnoi 2009, 382). Portnoi (2009, 382) argues for example that using 'who is best' selection criteria will end up privileging White candidates due to the invisibility of whiteness as a valued norm (see also Higgins 2007, 109). As a result of this invisibility, there is a failure to recognise how prejudice is perpetuated based on standards that parade as universal but are in reality raced, classed and gendered (see Steyn and van Zyl 2011).

Furthermore, another way in which the university structures maintain or reproduce themselves is by pretending to be accepting on a superficial level, but a closer look reveals a strategic selection of specific kinds of people — those that fit into the system or will not cause too much trouble. As Thandi notes:

> …because the other thing that White colleagues do is when they want to escape the duty and the burden of transformation, they go and poach the top African minds and what they then do is they pretend that they are pro-transformation but what they actually doing is that they suppress the pan-African sentiment, so they will hire someone from Lesotho, so my friend who is from Lesotho is always complaining about this, because they know that as a person from Lesotho you can't just demand higher wages, you can't just demand to be treated fairly in the Department, oh why are there only two Black people in the department, you are scared, so there is a pretence that there is a commitment to transformation when hiring non-South African, Africans whereas in fact what it is there to do is to dumb down the political objectives, whereas what I would want us to do is to put South African transformation in a broader Pan-African context (Thandi).

Scott (1990, 190) argues that 'arguments that assume that disguised ideological dissent or aggression operates as a safety-valve to weaken 'real' resistance ignores the paramount fact that such ideological dissent is virtually always expressed in practices that aim at an unobtrusive renegotiation of power relations'. The point here is that such forms of intellectual resistance are expressed in practices that aim at a subtle renegotiation of power relations. Hence, when the reaction to the need to be inclusive is to recruit foreign nationals as a way of fulfilling the black quota, the system is trying to renegotiate the power relation. The system was constructed in such a way that allowed for the exclusion of Black South Africans, thus to reproduce such ways despite the pressure to include Black bodies, the structures substitute the South African body with the African body and term it transformation (see Higgins 2007, 109; Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo 2006; van Wyk 2004; Steyn and van Zyl 2011). What is revealed here is the way structures attempt to maintain themselves by renegotiating power relations to suit their interests.

In addition, being delegitimised is also a way of resisting intellectually, in the sense that the agent is silenced in order to prevent him or her from speaking out or taking action that engenders change. This is carried out by strategically delegitimising the agent's argument or point of view as both Daryl and Natalie describe below. Of significance here is the delegitimisation of ideas, silencing of individuals and discursive violence that occur in a university context that prides itself in being a site of intellectual freedom, academic freedom, free exchange of ideas, collegiality. As Daryl and Natalie note:

> I have been hurt at times in public forums in Rhodes University where there have been others in the University who have lessened 'your' voice because 'you' come from a White and male position. So that when something radical or something is suggested or something that is in fact not appropriate and one counters it, a huge lot is subsumed and they talk about subtext and all these kind of sociological stuff, like, 'you are not conscious of what you are doing' and all that kind of stuff. That is very debilitating, it is a bit like a Freudian saying yeah, you are denying, I know why you have got self-denial, it is an understandable self-defense mechanism…so I have been hurt here at times and I have been silenced at times in the University because of being simply a White male (Daryl).
>
> …you are wanting to introduce something new or interesting, quite often there are a lot of conservative people who just vote it out so it can't, so university-wide changes cannot be implemented where there is not sufficient will on the part of ordinary academics, on the part of Senate and Council. I think also this institution is a little bit too cautious…. I mean the only thing that I felt personally is that sometimes I felt that those kinds of petty fights, although they are not really petty, that I was talking about, people don't want to include you in this because you are not radical enough. You need to have particular views to belong to that particular camp or whatever, that has sometimes been a bit of an obstacle for me where I feel like some people don't feel that I am committed to transformation because I don't agree with them fully or something and I can't work with them because they don't want to work with me (Natalie).

Thus the voices of some are delegitimised to prevent their ideas from being valued and to silence them and cow them into not taking action. Those who silence Whites like Natalie and Daryl are also exhibiting their strategic competence in the sense that in the South African context there is a good deal of legitimacy to a position which questions the commitment of White people to transformation. Some people are able to use their race whether it is Black or White and their gender, to crowd out the voices of those with whom they disagree or are in competition with. If you are positioning yourself for power and reproduction, it is strategic to marginalise for instance a strong White voice that is in a position to resist your efforts. Thinking about this in terms of the field, in Bourdieu's terms, soccer

players on the field are trying to get to the goal; as agents we are all trying to position ourselves closer to the goal. Strategically as individuals, we try to position ourselves more favourably regarding whatever, it could be material resources, it could be status, it could be recognition, it could be a sense of achievement, whatever the goals are, you position yourself strategically in terms of those goals. So by delegitimising all the White people in the field that are in my way for example, I am going to get closer to the goal, then I can use my blackness and their whiteness strategically to delegitimise them while making my own voice more legitimate. That is a clever way of advancing one's own strategic position and interests and it is a strategy that arises from the specific set of possibilities that the current configuration of structures offers — a configuration which the savvy operator, the strategically competent agent will utilise to her advantage.

A different form of contestation is to use evasion. Evasion can be used as a 'safe' expression of resistance when a legitimate but uncomfortable question or a question that threatens the prevailing fabric is asked. Thus when Chris asked about transforming a White culture, he was told that 'it is not relevant'. Structures thus reproduce themselves by refusing to engage questions that may upset the way things are.

> So I remember asking the Vice Chancellor in a large meeting you know when Vice Chancellors invite the academic community to go and ask questions and I asked the question and there were about 400 people there, in the room, I asked a question about transformation and what are the policies that are happening at the University here regarding transformation and there was an immediate change in the sound of the whole amphitheatre, a change in its tone and the Vice Chancellor sat in a lame way and I was told very quickly that this is not an academically relevant subject, that the gathering was only about academic matters, what you are asking is not an academic matter and then a few minutes later this same man stood up and asked a question about the pension fund [laughs] — that is an academic matter but transformation isn't (Chris).

Chris describes here a very common discursive strategy which has to do with the power to define — for instance to define what is and is not an 'academic' question, to define what a committee or meeting is for, to define what the terms of debate are and what will and will not be allowable items for discussion.

Another form evasion is the deflection of responsibility for, or interest in, issues regarding transformation to a particular group of individuals. These (deflecting) agents use their strategic

competence to allow selectively some change and to then say well those are the people who must bear the burden as Thandi explained:

> I was doing my work in my office and somebody knocked on the door and I give them time and saw that it was one of those University engagements, public issues, part of our job but the colleagues sent them to me from another department. Why did they do that? Why didn't they take it upon themselves? What makes them think that I have got time and resources or energy or effect or the desire to help, it is because I am Black?…In fact it does become the burden of a few because other people don't see why it should be their problem.It shows you that transformation becomes a burden of a few activists rather than a culture of looking forward for the entire University academic body….So really people must get over these Thandi is a voice thing because they don't want to do it, so they make you seem like a voice, it must be your burden, they don't want to as long as the university is semi-stable for White South Africans of a certain kind and they are okay here, they can tolerate a bit of this noise coming from the Thandi's and Puleng's and it makes them feel a bit of legitimacy, oh look we have got our people that make noise, here they are, as if that is what we want to do, really it is tiring (Thandi).

Thandi, as a 'voice', is accepted and permitted to be a voice because of the structural conditions, i.e. the imperative to transform. This gives the illusion of an institution that is seemingly taking the imperative to transform seriously. As Thandi notes, she is permitted to have a voice because it gives the illusion that transformation is taking place, that there is a place for change to occur. This allows individuals who do not see transformation as important enough to strategically evade by shifting the burdens to others. It becomes a burden because the process of transformation is massive, slow and painful and only a few people are left to take on the struggle. The term 'burden of a few' portrays the struggle within fields between those who want to change and those who shift the responsibility for changing onto others. By shifting such responsibilities and 'allowing' a few changes or a limited degree of dissent, the structure is able to maintain itself by appearing to be transforming. Sometimes in other to maintain themselves, dominant structures permit the existence of a few voices of dissent or 'radicals' to give the illusion of transformation. This transformation is mostly surface level and there is no real engagement with the structures, cultures and practices that need to be transformed. Rather the responsibility to effect the changes that are regarded as 'tolerable' is given to a few as Thandi notes — in short, in a context where being White and male is the norm, it is convenient to construct transformation as being the role of women and Blacks.

Scholars (see for instance Cassim 2006, 229, 230; Howell and Lazarus 2003, 61; Soudien 2010) argue that university structures and cultures are often very difficult to change as the 'old guard' are

unwilling or unable to accept far-reaching change. Some participants spoke about how difficult it was for them to convince older colleagues of the need for change. Because they are set in their ways and because these older colleagues are often in decision-making positions, the structure is reproduced and the status quo is maintained. Alex refers also to how being an insider who has grown up in the system can act as a limitation on agency because of 'a very long relationship with those people'. This comment highlights the fact that interactions and conflicts concerning institutional transformation are at the end of the day human conflicts involving human emotions — whether those be of fear, friendship, loyalty and politeness.

> I have been here and I am close friends with many of the older staff and it is difficult to convince them, in fact, I can't convince some of them that diversity should play any role at all in appointment processes. My older colleagues would certainly not have voted in favour of taking the pictures down in the Council Chamber[22]. Now in my position, it would have been much easier if I hadn't had a very long relationship with those people. I wonder if that makes any sense to you, but they are people that I have worked with, essentially grown-up with through my academic career and then they just think I am round the bend when I say we have to take into account diversity in appointments (Alex).

Kathy similarly foregrounded fear as being at the root of resistance to transformation and more controversially perhaps, argued also that fear (of subordination or being regarded as 'less of a person') lies at the root of the desire for the accoutrements of power and privilege on the part of some of those previously dispossessed by apartheid.

> ...when I think back to my own leadership in different organisations, there is a constant fear any woman leader who is worth, would admit that there is a constant sense of fear that one is inadequate, what one is doing is wrong, I don't know how many women in leadership positions have said to me I feel like a fraud, I feel like one day somebody is going to find out that I am really not good at this and I will be exposed, so it is managing that fear, fear constricts, shuts things down...I think my own leadership and my own desire to be an agent of transformation, the situations in which I become fearful and, therefore, become sometimes aggressive or else I shut down at the moments that have been very difficult for me...I think the key one would be that for me problems and challenges become obstacles to transformation

[22]Prior to 2011, the walls of University's Council Chambers were adorned with portraits of previous Vice Chancellors — all of whom were white and male — which many argued reflected a history of white male domination, further emphasising the pervasiveness of the institution's white culture. On the 1st of December 2011, a tapestry reflecting the history that has shaped the University replaced the portraits, this was done to acknowledge the experiences and struggles of black people in South Africa (see the 'VC's Tapestry Unveiling Address' https://www.ru.ac.za/vice-chancellor/speechespresentations/name_58804_en.htm) .

> when there is an element of fear that then breeds resistance of some kind and so that here operates at a range of levels (Kathy).

An aspect of fear to which Kathy alludes, is the way in which fear of being ridiculed may prevent the individual from acting. Portnoi (2009, 382) argues than an important part of changing institutional cultures is changing the mind-sets of those within the institution especially those of the previously dominant groups (Fourie 199, 277; Ogude, Nel and Oosthuizen 2005). Echoing this point the report of the MCTHEI argued that many universities are characterized by a culture of silence, fear and victimisation and as a result of this there has been little progress with respect to transformation (DoE 2008). The report noted that White staff and students were anxious about transformation because they were afraid of the future and for Black staff and students, anxiety arose from the fear of being victimised which promoted a culture of silence within universities (DoE 2008, 32, 90). Kathy emphasised how fear of being exposed as a 'fraud' can prevent the individual from taking action aimed at change. As she notes, this kind of fear 'shuts things down' and ensures the reproduction of oppressive cultures. What is perhaps evident in Kathy's narrative and in the literature is the way in which fear is brought on by cultures that tend to oppress and victimise those who may want to take action aimed at changing such oppressive cultures.

This fear is revealed in the resort to verbal attacks when engaging at an intellectual level as Carol notes:

> …people sometimes experience what we do as an imposition and then they start arguing back and if they can't take the argument back at an intellectual level then in the past certainly there was a reduction to sarcasm: stupid horrible comments which can be very hurtful, very hurtful (Carol).

Swartz (1997, 125, 126) has argued that 'entry into professional fields limits struggle to the forms and terms of what is considered legitimate professional procedure. Personal insults and physical violence, for example, are excluded as unprofessional forms of conflict. But challenging the degree of objectivity in an opposing viewpoint is fair play'. In the university, this struggle is for the most part carried out at a symbolic or discursive level, but contrary to Swartz's argument, the boundaries of what is professional can be pushed and can be enacted in overtly brutal ways. As Carol notes, forms of resistance shift from the discursive to a more material, felt level once there is a realisation that resistance at a purely intellectual level is not working. Resistance then shifts from intellectual forms to sarcasm and very unprofessional insults. Fear is reflected in the reduction to 'sarcasm and stupid horrible comment' when they cannot engage on an intellectual level with her. Agency is being

able to engage in such battles despite resistance. Kathy and Carol's agency is revealed in their ability to take action despite the 'horrible comments', being 'tugged down', 'rubbed', 'bruised' or 'battered'.

As is evident in Carol's and Kathy's narratives, the fear of changing breeds resistance. This is because individuals who experience the system as comfortable may fear the loss of their comfortability and position; they may see transformation as a threat to their access to resources, identity and power — they thus will want to ensure things remain the way they are. As argued in the previous chapter a change in the mind-set of the individual (a coming to consciousness) plays an important role in the transformation of oppressive structures and cultures. Hemson and Singh (2010, 939) note that there is a need to 'change the rules of the game by identifying the different modes in which power operates and the ways they construct life'. These narratives highlight some of the ways in which power operates and structures are reproduced. One cannot easily overcome such forms of resistance to transformation except by countering them with another form of strategy. To engage in battles aimed at transformation is to defend one's ideas in the face of resistance from the dominant, taken-for-granted, business-as-usual ideas that are powerful and influential in the institution.

Bob Jessop (1996, 124) argues that agents have the capacity to reformulate, amid limiting and constraining conditions, their identities and interests and are able to engage in strategic calculations about contexts. This capacity to convince or persuade others points to a kind of strategic competence which needs to be possessed by the agent if she is to be successful. An agent is strategic in selecting what actions he or she takes and competent when their selected actions and interpretations result in successful outcomes. Thus to be an agent is to be strategically competent, to always be looking for ways to achieve a specific goal and at least some of the time succeeding. One strategy that an agent may adopt for example would be to take an approach of observation and listening to people because the realities of power and the discourses prevalent in the context prevent more forceful acts (see Scott 1990, 191, 192). We see Max for example, for all that he occupies a position of power and influence, understanding the realities of power operating within the university context and realising that issuing a directive would not be useful. Hence, his decision to employ a different strategy:

> So, when you arrive at an institution and when you are wanting to bring about changes, you have to have a very deep and close insight into the particular university. Where are the centres of power and how are you going to be approaching issues? What's going to be the likely pace of changes? What are going to be the facilitating conditions? What is going to be constraining? Which social groups and actors are likely to constrain and oppose you and for what reasons? Who is likely

> to support you and for what reasons? These are major strategic and tactical issues that you have to put your head around in terms of systematically undertaking a programme of transformation. So, this is a general principle, understand the terrain, understand the context, understand who is comfortable with conditions and who is alienated from those cnditions, and so on. And then work out your strategy and tactics in terms of how you are going to intervene in this kind of state of affairs in order to bring about those desirable changes (Max).

As Max emphasised, important to being a strategically competent agent is understanding the structures and context in which one acts or interacts (see also Beckert 1999, 783). To be strategic is to be able to use one's personal power to activate structural mechanisms towards change. Sometimes knowing the ropes enables an agent to use structures to his or her advantage. An agent who is able to understand the context, is able to strategically take actions to achieve his or her goal. This is related to 'having experience' and 'knowing the ropes' such that experience, knowing the ropes and understanding the terrain allows for the agent to take strategic actions. Knowing the ropes or understanding the terrain is similar to Giddens' 'rules': he argues that for an actor to employ such rules and resources and utilise them in social interaction, it is important to have a comprehensive understanding of the rules (Giddens 1979, 66; Dickie-Clark 1986, 163). This knowledge and understanding informed Max's decisions on how to respond to what he found problematic with the system he encountered when taking up a position at the university.

> I didn't arrive at work on the first day on the 1st of June and send a letter to every part of the university and to every academic to say as of the 1st of June the term non-whites shall no longer exist at Rhodes University. I bided my time, and I slowly raised it when I was ready. I heard the word non-white being used during first 6 months when I was walking around Rhodes, talking to different departments, and speaking to deans. I came across the use of that word by certain academics, certain heads of departments, I made a note of that, I did not respond at all to the use of that term immediately. Eventually when I had heard enough, I began to engage first the staff who were responsible for the statistical digest around why they were using this term 'non-white'? I listened to their explanation or rationale, and it became quite clear that once you referred to African South Africans as black, then you did not have a generic term for African, Indian and coloureds, who were the previously oppressed, and that is why you made recourse in the statistical digest to A+B+C or to the word non-white (Max).

Max — a very powerful actor — carefully and strategically chooses his battles and one of the battles he chooses to highlight is a discursive one — 'how we choose to name things'. Max understands the realities of power and discourses operating within the university context and that issuing a directive

would not be useful. Hence, the decision to employ a different strategy — engaging with the people in his context rather than issuing directives. This kind of strategy takes the shape of observation and listening to people because the realities of power and the discourses prevalent in that context prevent more forceful acts (see Scott 1990, 191, 192). Max chooses a more circuitous strategy which is, nonetheless, successful — he is able to achieve his goal of changing the nomenclature that had previously commonly been employed.

Inga's choice to remain silent and give a blank face rather than getting into arguments and street fights can be described as a strategic position taken to reject discourses that attempt to marginalise and exclude her:

> I'm a blank face but that doesn't mean that my head is blank. I will not express what I want to tell you, because I am not, I am not going to get into a street fight, I'm not a street smart person, so I will not fight with you. I will just stay quiet, but I will do what I have to do and that is exactly what I have done. So, if I don't fight back a system that is not empowering....it is about breaking spirits (Inga).

Bourdieu refers to this as position-taking, a strategy implemented by actors within fields of conflicts in order to improve and defend their positions (Naidoo 2004, 459; Bourdieu 1993, 35). For Inga the choice to remain silent or give a blank face or remain 'passive' is a position adopted in order to maintain her position and not get into 'street fights' because she feels that she is not 'street smart'. Inga chooses to fight in a subtle way — she makes her face literally blank so that it cannot be read easily by the other. Carol similarly points to her awareness of the need to consciously think about how to achieve one's strategic goals:

> 'But then the other thing is that sometimes you have to be strategic, pick up on things because they are going to help you get to a bigger goal' (Carol).

Strategically competent actors are knowledgeable about their contexts and the conditions which influence their experiences (Tucker 1998, 71). An understanding of the rules/structure and the discourses that are inherent in a specific context, thus enables such an actor. Having knowledge of the rules and how resources work enables the agent to deploy structural mechanisms to enable social change (Archer 2000; Beckert 1999, 782). So, Carol being able to 'understand the system and pick up on things', enables her to manipulate and use structures in different ways to 'help get to a bigger goal'. In that sense while structures themselves do not necessarily enable the agent, structures can be enabling if the individual understands the terrain and how it works and is able to deploy this understanding successfully in the pursuit of specific goals.

While these individuals occupied specific positions i.e. dean, Black, White, woman or man within the university, their stories reveal individuals taking up new/alternative positions either to take actions or in response to the conflicts they encounter. Knowing and choosing which battles to fight points to their strategic competence and ability to know how to fight without becoming so damaged that one loses. Dana refers to a different form of strategy where actors use their positions to effect change.

> Yeah so, I think another thing that has been personally enabling in my work is to be quite frank, to be a White woman, you know White women are often seen as sort of the nurturing teachers and I think that has allowed easier access to certain spaces and how I work (Dana).

This also points to knowledgeable agents acting within social structures — they are able to use their positions because they understand the rules of the game and know the resources needed to realise their interests (see Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Giddens 1979; 1984, 90; Swartz 1997). Giddens (1984, 91) highlights actor's knowledge in relation to their context as important to their ability to reproduce or transform structural relations. Agents who possess various forms of strategic competence derived from their understanding of, and positioning in, the contexts and structural relations within the system, are able to deploy these competencies to achieve their goals.

The relationship between an actor's position and being enabled and limited within a specific context has been highlighted as pertinent to agency (see New 1994; Bhaskar 1998, 41; Giddens 1984, 84-85; Callinicos 2004, 275). As has been argued, structures, while limiting, also provide enabling conditions and the strategic competence of the participants is revealed in their ability to use such enablements — for instance race/gender to effect transformation. While there is an acknowledgment of the ways in which structures tend to reproduce themselves, these participants know and understand that in the South African context, despite the limitations, their race, gender and class does give them certain forms of privilege -- and they are able to strategically use this insight to take action towards change. As Dana notes, she is able to use her whiteness to her advantage. The knowledge and understanding of the context enables strategically competent actors to use their race for instance as a resource to engender transformation.

Sometimes strategic competence lies in the ability of an agent to put forward and have accepted their preferred definition of a term or course of action. For examples, Carol saw the contested notion of 'quality assurance' as having transformational potential and was able to get the university to see it

this way rather than according to the dominant understanding of quality assurance as efficiency. As noted above, Scott (1990 in Silliman 2001, 195) argues that agents rarely organise their lives around taking over a place, but rather around forging residence in it. Carol's view of quality assurance as transformation and her efforts to instill this view in the university as *its* preferred definition can be described as an act of 'forging residence' in the university space — that is to say strategically drawing on her knowledge and understanding of the rules of the game to advance a change agenda:

> But I didn't see it as quality assurance as efficiency, I always saw it as quality assurance as transformation…I'd say that the single biggest thing that I was able to achieve in relation to change was way back in, it might have been in 2002, when I managed to persuade the Senate that assessment was really important. We had an assessment policy but I managed to persuade the Senate that as part of probation we needed to check that new members of staff were assessing validly and reliably and so I got them to agree with that (Carol).
>
> So that was as a result of I think a fair amount of pushing on my part… I just made a very strong case…Maybe I was quite forceful and I put the case very strongly, I think if they had picked up any doubts in me they probably wouldn't have (approved it)…I think one or two colleagues might have had one or two reservations about this but I got the support of the department (Richard).

Both Carol and Richard are powerful voices in the institution. Their ability to win the argument, to 'push' and persuade is contingent both on their personal powers and strategic ability and on their structural position in the university. It is important to note that not all individuals are equally in a position to be influential in this way. Influence is not an effect of individual characteristics alone but is also tied up with structural factors and questions of (raced, classed, gendered) identities. Frazier (2013, 359) argues that, 'all individuals and social groups are integrally involved in the discursive construction of any social phenomenon'. Carol's deploys her strategic competence to successfully forge acceptance for a new meaning of quality assurance that helps to move the conversation in a pro-transformation direction while Max reveals his involvement in deconstructing the term 'non-White'. Power does not just come from role, position or responsibility; it lies in the strategic ability to convince and persuade people to see one's point of view. Of course, a host of factors play a role in this act of persuasion — for instance race, age, gender, experience and position but in all cases, to act requires of someone to make a choice, the outcome of which cannot be known in advance.

A number of scholars have noted this characteristic of structures of being both limiting as well as containing possibilities for action (Bhaskar 1998; Giddens 1979; Archer 1995; Bevir 1999, 73).

Understanding the field as constrained opens up the possibility for action for Inga. She understands that the field is a constrained one, but on the basis of this understanding is able to take strategic steps to get what she wants:

> Because the field is constrained and very restrictive in its own ways...and initially in your career everyone has to draw the line. You have to do what the system requires you to do before you can transform slowly with time and with gaining the momentum of people and confidence of people before a movement can start for something positive to come out of it (Inga).

The decision to 'do what the system requires you to do' while revealing the limiting nature of structures and the degree of constraints placed on actors who want to do things differently, also reveals agency (see Fegan 1999, 264). Inga is not simply complying but is rather biding her time before taking action at a time that she feels will best be suited to achieving her goals. Her agency lies in her understanding of the need to 'draw the line' and to comply with the requirements of the system before acting. It is in that very act/strategy of 'doing what the system requires' before taking action to transform that her agency is revealed. Thus, agency lies in the ability to realise what is needed to act, to strategise and then to act accordingly at an optimal moment. As Scott (1990, 193) writes, 'most subordinates conform and obey, not because they have internalised the norms of the dominant, but because a structure of surveillance, reward, and punishment makes it prudent for them to comply'. The point is that Inga's realisation of the later possibilities for transformative action enabled her choice to do what the system requires initially.

Having strategic competence is knowing when to compromise, knowing when to walk away and knowing which battles to fight.

> ....I would say I derive my power from being able to analyse contexts and its sort of like a strategic competence, so knowing which battles to fight, knowing where to fight them, knowing how to fight them and sometimes being aware that small gains, lots of small gains will get you there rather than big bang...the proposal was premature but the deans dealt with it as a proposal and the resistance to that...then I said, I am going to hold fire for a bit, I am going to let it rest, I am going to try another means now, to try to get that through (Carol).

> There're times when you just walk away because it is just not going to work, you can try and it is not going to work and we have had to do that many times (Thandi).

Krause (2011, 304) argues that agency is more than the successful enactment of our intended projects. While Carol experiences resistance and is unable to get the proposal through, her agency is revealed

in her ability to put the proposal forward, so also Thandi's capacity to 'try' reveals her agency. The decision of Carol to 'let it rest', 'try another means' and Thandi's experience of frustration, 'getting tired' and knowing when to 'walk away' affirms their agency as this is a conscious choice on their part. Thus, agency is more than just successful outcomes, it is the process of being involved in and engaging within social relations within a specific context in ways that reveal insight into and knowledge of the context and how best to position oneself within it to achieve one's goals.

To be an agent then is to devise strategies of enabling transformation in the face of seeming limitations which is what Thandi, Max and Chris have done. Karp (1986, 133) notes that by virtue of these strategies, individuals are able to achieve their aims and they may do this for example by acknowledging, and partially, strategically acceding to, the structures of domination in exchange for access to scarce resources.

> … you're just like Ok this White thing had been a problem, how am I going to get around this, what are things on my side, okay I have got a Ph.D., my parents are in politics, I have got a friend here I have a friend there, then you just work around them (Thandi).
>
> My communications were always carefully crafted. They weren't just angry statements or words. They were carefully calculated, and they were trying to get certain messages across all the time. With proposals to bring about change, it's not good enough to simply have ideas around equity and enhancing the representation of black academics. You also have to have carefully considered and implementable plans (Max).
>
> What we are doing doesn't have a clear overt political agenda, in a narrow sense it is a political agenda…we are not jumping up with our red flags, trying to challenge the status quo, we are doing something that I think is more subtle perhaps in some ways and perhaps also not as threatening although I think in the end transformative potentials are great (Chris).

Thandi acknowledges 'whiteness' as a symbol of domination and deploys personal power i.e. her doctorate, influential parents and friends to activate her agency. For Max, this means carefully crafting messages into his daily interactions and conversations to bring about change. It is through the daily activities of using one's personal properties or power, crafting messages in interaction that change occurs. Chris, rather than overtly challenging the status quo, is doing something more subtle -- he is fighting discursively by questioning and finding avenues through which he can bring about change.

Strategic competence also means being able to create and find alternative fields for action. Sometimes if the agent is unable to get her idea through, s/he finds or creates an alternative field to get those ideas through. McNay (2003, 141) argues that a conceptualisation of the creative productive aspects of agency enables an explanation of how individuals respond in unexpected and innovative ways that may catalyse social change when faced with constraints and limitations.

> It is actually quite difficult to get people to discuss because they all want to do, let's get settled with, let's move on, you know, business as usual almost. So you have to find the spaces where you can insert those ideas and have the critical conversations (Carol).

> I have come to the point where I think that I can't actually get people to commit to plans any more, all I can do is just nudge them a little bit and maybe get them excited, so instead of having a methodical planning meeting about what you're going to do about certain aspects of our curriculum, I just get somebody in who talks throughout the way they talk about their work, they inspire people and then organically people go off and see how about I try that too rather than coming up with methodical plans all the time, that's part of my own, people tell me that I create too many long documents… I don't know what one does about that and I think a key reason for that is people who work in the University environment, they are very often people who will hold onto their own rights to do things in a way, to have academic freedom, to not be very organised, to not have a rigid plan about what it is that they are setting out to do but to kind of have their own private space where they can do what they want (Tracy).

Actors within this volatile and unequal system have to find a way of negotiating this terrain to achieve their goals. One strategy that some actors who experience themselves as outsiders or invaders employ is, as Tracy highlights, to deploy informal mechanisms of resistance drawing for instance on, in the university context, powerful legitimising discourses of 'academic freedom' to carve out a space in which they are able to operate free of the strictures of the dominant cultures and expectations.

As Lightfoot *et al.* (1998, 202) argues, individuals do not necessarily respond to situations in a prescribed or uniform manner, rather they respond in an organic and opportunistic way to new opportunities and social relationships that are perceived as beneficial to their own interests. The enactment of creating these sites or finding these sites or other ways of being apart from being strategic reflects the agency of these individuals. These acts of seeking new opportunities, creating new or alternative fields for action, are however largely dependent on the status within the university,

the position, the race, the gender and so on of the actors (Lightfoot *et al.* 1998, 202). Their agency lies in their ability to work with these limitations and enablements in a strategic way — rather than seeing the site as inherently limiting and isolating of themselves, there is a form of strategic competence displayed where they create alternative enabling sites or relations. Through everyday interaction, individuals are able to create territories/zones to enable them to negotiate the conflicts and fractured-ness of the university. The conception of agency as individuals creating alternative fields offers an 'alternative to the passive subject that is a correlate of the discursive determinism of the negative paradigm of agency' (McNay 2003, 141; see also Magnus 2006). For example, Tracy, acknowledging her limitation in 'getting people to commit to plans', creates a site where they get inspired and take action. She is able to create a new condition that provides other individuals within that field with opportunities to act. Creating alternative fields can be described as a strategy deployed by agents to negotiate constraining conditions, to recognise the failure of past actions and to find new ways of acting to push their ideas forward. The creative dimension of agency, therefore, enriches our understanding of autonomy and reflexivity (McNay 2002, 141). What is significant about the ways in which structures constrain and enable actors within specific contextual parameters is that this then makes the actors ability to effect change all the more remarkable. They are able to overcome those battles, struggles, constructions and limitations while other actors are saying, 'oh you cannot get anything done' as was evident in the pilot study. These actors, despite those limiting structures, say 'ok well it is hard but I just went and did my own thing' -- they put on suits of armour to enable them to take on the system. This points to their strategic ability as they take up different positions in order to make changes despite those limiting structures. The creative dimension of agency also extends to individuals' ability to take up specific positions in order to effect change.

Giddens (1984, 14) notes that, 'to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of causal powers including that of influencing the causal powers deployed by others'. Strategic competence is the ability of the individual to win the hearts and minds of others within the context; it is to have the power and acumen to persuade others to see one's position. In *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, James Scott shows how 'each realm of open resistance to domination is shadowed by an infrapolitical twin sister who aims at the same strategic goals but whose low profile is better adapted to resisting an opponent who could probably win any open confrontation' (Scott 1990, 184). Scott (1990, 199) defined infrapolitics as 'the strategic form that the resistance of subjects (the oppressed) must assume under the condition of great peril'. The concept denotes attempts by individuals who occupy subordinate positions, to negotiate very oppressive

terrains in a concealed way. While Scott's argument refers to relations of domination and oppression as in the slave/master relationship in very oppressive contexts, the point of its use here is to emphasise the fact that in any given context where conflicting interests lead to 'contested relations', there will always be overt and subtle actions to change such social relations. The earlier discussion showed some of the visible ways in which actors attempt to engender transformation. Alex and Max describe the power of persuasion and the subtle ways in which individuals can take actions aimed at transformation:

> …it is your ability to convince the committee members that what is happening is wrong and we need to change it and we need to change it in these ways. So it is a power of persuasion, not a power of acting (Alex).

> You have to take people along with you. You have to be constantly persuading people intellectually about the kinds of changes that are needed, why they are needed, and what good things will come if we embrace those changes. You have to be very careful about being dirigiste, and ruling by administrative fiat (that from tomorrow it shall be like this, or from next week the following will happen), rather than really building consensus and persuading people and winning their support and ensuring that they are with you (Max).

Although Alex draws a distinction between acting and persuading, clearly, as Max explains, in universities, a great deal of acting comes in the form of persuading. Individuals who want to effect change have to find ways of engaging with those who might resist change or place barriers and obstacles in the way of change. They do this by trying to persuade, negotiate, win the argument and win over the hearts and minds of potential allies and enemies within the system. Krause (2011, 308) argues that the possibility of agents accomplishing any particular action is dependent on how such action is interpreted by others. Power here is defined not in terms of resistance but as 'a form of capability' (Giddens 1979, 68, 94; Callinicos 2004, 37). The capacity to persuade is a subtle form of action to win the argument rather than engaging in open confrontation. Beckert (1999, 782) describes this as a 'strategic agency': the ability to influence other people (see also Ortner 2001), meaning that the process of negotiating with, and persuading others is a strategic adaptation by agents to get others to interpret their proposed actions in a positive manner so as to bring about change. As Tracy and Kathy note:

> I went around the Department and I went into peoples' offices and I sat down with each member of staff and said to them, what is happening? Why are we fighting each other so much? And out of that, a conversation began, which ended up with us finding people from outside to mediate, people were brought in to help us to plan

> strategically around how we could have a shared vision for what we were here to do and that was the beginning of a long process, other people also started saying we cannot live like this, we need to have a different way of working together and over the years, I was just one of the agents I suppose, that little thing I did made one small change, but other people also played an important role in that and over the years we have since then found ways of talking to each other so that we now have established a shared project (Tracy).

> …my response to that anger and how dare you was to acknowledge people's right to be angry …So if I have learnt anything in the midst of those kinds of challenges it is how you deal with the conflicts that transformation will give rise to. That's the thing one learns through experiencing all of these conflicts and hopefully critically reflecting on them and choosing as often as possible a nonviolence response. The situations in which I become fearful and therefore become sometimes aggressive or else I shut down at the moments that have been very difficult for me because I have seen the consequence of either my aggression or my shutting down for the work I am trying to do and I have realised it does not take me forward in my own life. And sometimes the times when I feel the greatest shifts have happened is when I have been able to stand firm in the face of enormous fear or conflicts and invite a compassionate conversation by avoiding my own fear and choosing to rather work with the possibilities that I see in the situation, I see far greater possibilities for transformation. So for me another part of what I have learnt is the possibilities of conflicts, the creative and potentially positive possibilities of conflicts and the recognition that conflict is a normal part of life, as normal as breathing in and out (Kathy).

Kathy's and Tracy's narratives reveal how unconscious many of the participants are of the structure – they conceive of themselves as individuals and their actions as determined entirely from within their own personal characteristics and motivations (see Hay 2001, 127; Marsh 2010, 218). Lightfoot *et al.* (1998, 201) note that, 'it is through daily practices — how space is structured, how mundane domestic tasks are conducted, how refuse is disposed of — that people both organise and make sense of their lives'. Such practices have an effect on social relations within these contexts. Little things like having conversations, mediations that people enact repeatedly, have an effect on social interaction within these settings. Thus Tracy's 'little effort' of bringing people from outside to mediate and help the department strategise and seek different ways of working together led to change in the mode of social interaction within her department. For Kathy 'inviting a compassionate conversation and choosing to work with possibilities', creates the space for transformation. Thus, transformation or actions that lead to a change in social relations or structures need not be overt and intentional, or of enormous magnitude. The choice by Kathy to work with possibilities and Tracy's 'little effort', though they may seem like mundane forms of agency, do affect social relations and

interaction. As Giddens (1979, 91) notes, although agents operate within structurally influenced limits, their autonomy is revealed in their ability to choose a different course of action (see also Clegg 2006, 320). Kathy's ability to act 'otherwise' or 'rather work with possibilities in the face of enormous fear or conflicts' alters the structural conditions in her department making them more conducive rather than less conducive to the possibility for transformation. While individual experiences are conditioned by university fields in the form of constraints and enablements, these fields do not always produce the same effects (see Kannen 2014, 54). That is, individuals may take up different responses to the conditioning of structures and the constraints they experience. For Kathy, it meant having to learn that conflict is a part of everyday life and as a result rather than back down, she learns that only when she stands firm in the face of such conflicts are there possibilities for change or shifts. Her agency is revealed in her choice to 'rather work with the possibilities'. Kathy's narrative portrays agents always engaged in reflecting on their experiences and their interactions within these social systems. Reflecting on such experiences creates the conditions for their own transformation as agents. Such reflections enable the agent to recognise the problems with a mode of acting and choose different positions or courses of action in order to defend their positions.

Giddens (1979, 93) argues that power presumes a certain form of autonomy and interdependence between individuals and groups in the social system. Thus, the most powerful individuals may rely on the least powerful for their agency (see Giddens 1979). The process of negotiation reflects the agent's reliance on others when acting as Carol, Daryl and James note. To effect transformation thus implies winning the hearts and minds of others and to do so requires a certain capability in the agent—but this capability is in part structurally determined/shaped.

> I don't believe that you can force anybody to do anything, you have to win their hearts and minds, what I do feel is more secure when I challenge people, I feel much more able to say, hang on what is going on here and I can do that with my fellow deans, much more easily. So you can't mandate anything at a university, you know you can't force anybody to do anything, you have literally got to, in my experience, you have got to win the argument. But you can start the argument more easily I think….you have got to have, I think the agreement of academic peers and that would come through these sort of building of consensus, through the committee structure and I think that that building of consensus is discursive, you have got to work in the domain of culture….But my strategy had been, let's talk, let's talk, let's win the hearts and minds (Carol).
>
> And furthermore you have got to have willingness from both sides and there are lovely things but there are huge forces beyond us here that are going on, that are

> preventing transformation in a community sense in our area here and yeah, not everybody wants to develop, not everybody wants to see the learners develop and are prepared to put in the work that is involved (Daryl).

> It is difficult partly because I had to collaborate with five or six colleagues and not all of them are equally committed to the ideas in this course. There are quite a lot of things going on, herding cats, to bring everyone to this vision, if it is your vision, it feels like you are imposing your vision on other people, it has to be a negotiation (James).

You have to negotiate to get others to accept your vision of change. To negotiate is to persuade, to win hearts and minds. The power to persuade is then the capacity for an actor to achieve the desired goal where such achievement is dependent on the agency of others (Giddens 1979, 93). Thus, the act of 'building consensus', 'winning hearts and minds', 'collaborating with colleagues', or 'having willing parties', is a central strategic capacity which enhances the power of agents to achieve their goals. Successful persuasion and the ability to negotiate requires considerable skill as it rests on the capacity of agents to 'engage with the disposition of others' in order to take action (see Edwards and D'Arcy 2004, 149).

It must, however, be noted that your ability to negotiate is also dependent on a number of factors, such as your position, race and gender, factors which may be enabling or constraining.

> I think that in some ways it seems like if you are a White woman you are 'more able' because you are trusted so, for example once I had to give a presentation about White privilege and I was trying to convince White staff members to get them to recognise that actually there are ways in which White lecturers are advantaged, so, students, Black lecturers are challenged in ways that White lecturers are not and White lecturers don't realise that. So when you get a glowing student evaluation, White lecturers don't recognise that the Black lecturer's evaluation might have to do with the students' racism and not with the Black person's lesser ability. And I remember I gave that presentation and I thought I was being quite harsh but some conservative White people seemed to accept it and to agree with me and I think it was easier for them to agree with me because I wasn't so threatening because I am White. So they would listen and then it didn't seem so threatening (Natalie).

The ability to have your ideas accepted and deploy your agency is determined also by the context in which one acts. So, for a White woman like Natalie, the space is experienced as 'free' — that is to say, enabling. The agency to persuade is based on a competence possessed by agents to 'recognise and use the support' of individuals to achieve their interests (Edwards and D'Arcy 2004, 149; see

also Edwards 2005). It must, however, be noted that, as Callinicos (2004, 100) argues, the power to persuade is dependent on the position of the actor in relation to wider social relations (see also Lightfoot *et al.* 1998, 202). As Callinicos (2004, 37) argues, actions consist in the exercise of power and the power agents have is partly determined by structures. The participants in the present study occupy relatively influential positions (whether in relation to occupational status, 'race', gender and/or class) within the university and this gives them power. Power is not only derived from positional status but also by virtue of a combination of factors like race, gender, class and also the context; these combine to provide individuals with situated access to power that allows for successful persuasion of others on occasion. While these acts of persuasion and negotiation may be subtle, they are strategic because they have a very powerful effect on transformation.

While the ability to use one's position (such as race or gender) in a context where the ability to act or put forward one's preferred definition of transformation, may be remarkable, transformation requires overhauling those practices that allow for example White and male bodies' privileged access to resources. Thus while White and male academics may use their differential access to resources and power to engender transformation the question is why those inhabiting these bodies still possess these privileges.

7.7 Conclusion

If structures, cultures and institutional practices are maintained and reproduced both materially and discursively, it follows then that to transform such cultures one must fight both material and discursive battles. To be an agent of transformation in the university then is not just to fight discursively but also to fight materially. What is significant, moreover, is the ability of individuals to shift between these states or to work at both levels to bring about change. As they engage in battles to produce discursive and material change we see the participants also simultaneously being produced discursively and materially. The chapter invokes the idea of agency as intertwined with 'battles' as a call for attention to be paid to the sometimes violent ways in which structures and relations within structures are experienced both discursively and materially by individuals within such institutions.

Structures maintain or reproduce themselves both discursively and materially and to be able to work to bring about change, agents must have the strategic competence to work at both levels. In this chapter I have argued that to fight or engage in such battles the agent has to be strategically competent. The participants' ability to engage in battles both at a discursive and a material level and to be

selective and deliberate in their choice of which battles to fight and how to fight them, reflects their strategic competence. Strategic competence, though important to the transformation process, is not only possessed by agents of transformation but (albeit differentially) by all actors within the field. The strategic competence possessed by those who wish to reproduce existing relations may take the form for example of evasion or countering ideas, and because these forms of action reflect prevailing ideas, they are often difficult to see. This makes the actions taken by agents of change all the more remarkable because they are able to counter forms of resistance to change which can be very difficult to see or point to. The strategic competence of agents of transformation is revealed in their ability to persuade, build alliances, negotiate embattled terrains and push the boundary of what is possible in a post-colonial and post-apartheid structural context.

8 Chapter

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

The link between structure and agency especially the limitation of structures on human action is perhaps the central problem in human science. A number of scholars have engaged with the question of human agency, specifically the relationship between structure and action. Bhaskar (1998) for instance sees structures as possessing emergent properties that allow them to determine human action, he argues that human actions have the potential to transform such structures — what he terms the 'transformational model of human activity'. Building on Bhaskar's (1998) critical realist or realist perspective, Archer (1995) outlines a comprehensive account of how transformation happens, what she terms the 'the morphogenetic approach'. In her account of the relationship between structure and agency, specifically how human action leads to or allows for structural change, she gives a model of the process of transformation that may be useful in accounting for transformation in an organisation, institution or state. The model accounts for the interplay of structural properties, cultural properties and agential properties in any given context and how they lead to either a reproduction (morphostasis) or transformation (morphogenesis). In line with Bhaskar she sees structures as possessing emergent properties, she also accounts for agential properties and their effect on structures. Her account as well as Bhaskar's see structures as pre-dating human action, her argument being that at any given time T^1, the structures necessarily predate the human actions that reproduce or transform them. Bhaskar and Archer argue for a view of structures as necessarily pre-dating action and for a view of the relationship between structure and agency as an interplay. Giddens (1979) takes a different approach —in 'The constitution of society' Giddens argues for a view of agency and structures as mutually constitutive of each other, as 'two sides of the same coin' where structures are only revealed when individuals take action. For Giddens, structures are made up of rules and resources which actors draw upon when acting. The link between structure and action is thus considered in terms of a duality as structures affect action and are revealed when action is taken — rather than as an interplay between them which is Archer's position. Giddens, Archer and Bhaskar conceive of structure and action in terms of duality and interplay; of their relationship with each other and how they affect social reproduction/transformation. Marxist accounts link structure and action to power relations and

relations of production. For Callinicos (2004), structure and action is linked to productive resources and power. The implication of this is the individual's capacity to act is always dependent on their relative access to power and resources. While for Callinicos (2004) structures are related to productions of power and resources, for Hay (2002) a conception of structure must include the role of strategy. That is, structures are conceived as strategic and actors as strategically competent individuals who are capable of calculating structural situations to achieve their goal.

My interest in the link between structure and agency — the limitation placed on human action by structures and how agents are able to take action that lead to transformation, was sparked by Saba Mahmoods' work on agency (see Mahmood 2005). While I agree with her argument for a view of agency as dependent on the choices of the agent, I was troubled by her analogy of Nadia's choice and willingness to 'cultivate shyness'. Growing up, I was suspicious of rules that defined the limits of what I was supposed to do and be as a woman -- I never really bought into that. My readings of Foucault, Spivak, Derrida and similar scholars further deepened my questions about norms, ideology, power and their effects on human action. I was specifically troubled by how the choice to accept what I felt was a 'constraining culture' could be viewed as agency. I was brought up as a Christian and my religion requested certain things of me, things I felt even as a child and teenager were constraining, for example the need to cover my hair, the need to speak softly and curb my anger. I was particularly troubled because I had a loud voice and did not act 'girly'. Mahmood's article sparked my interest, and I asked what does it mean to be an agent? How does the context and norms and rules within that context affect what agency means to the individuals within that context? In a society where the history of racism, classism and sexism pervades contemporary relations, what does it mean to be an agent? How are individuals within this context able to negotiate such oppressive structures and transform social relations?

To answer my question I undertook in-depth interviews with 15 individuals that were identified as influential and as having made a contribution to transformation. The interviews explored experiences of participants taking actions aimed at transformation and what enabled or limited them in doing so. I found that the actions taken were sparked by a moral or ethical frustration with the way things are, an acknowledgment of the problems within the context and a desire to do something different. Also motivating such actions was a firm belief in the course of action participants took or wanted to take. The analysis process aimed to identify what it means to be an agent in a South African context, where the call for social transformation, especially higher education transformation was new and strong.

What was significant in the participants' stories was the ways in which they alluded to stories of struggles and conflicts they experienced and that were experienced by other people within the institution. Davis (2002, 19) describes stories as social transactions which builds a sense of solidarity between the story teller and the reader/listener (see also Scott *et al.* 2009, 110; Gargiulo 2006). These stories reveal the conflicts and struggles that often go on within universities, in particular they point to the experiences of the 'other' within these fields. Stories provide a vehicle of producing and articulating shared meaning and understanding of the struggles that individuals encounter. These stories help us see conflict and agency through the eyes of other people, they make these conflicts very present through the experiences of participants and the stories told by them (see Sanders 1997, 117, 118). These stories reveal how the participants exercise agency as they deal with challenges and conflicts (see Ganz 2012, 2). Also significant was the ways in which engaging in such struggles and conflicts was brought about by a reformulation of the participants' interests and the ability of participants to come to consciousness of their own position/subjectivity and how this might put them in a position to effect change. In participants' stories I was able to discern how they came to reformulate their own interests, how they became 'knowers' with insight into their context and how they engaged in battles to effect change — all of which point to both their reflexivity and strategic competence. The role of a hermeneutic phenomenological study is not only to get at the essence of a particular phenomenon but to provide an interpretation in the light of participants' experiences within their context (see Van Manen 1997; Lindseth and Norberg 2004, 151). In answering the question, 'What does agency to effect transformation mean in a South African context?' I found that having agency to effect transformation in a society where relations of domination and oppression are pervasive, means:

1. The reformulation of interests.
2. Coming to consciousness.
3. Engaging in discursive and material battles.
4. Reflexivity and strategic competence possessed by actors.
5. Willingness to/ being capable of acting despite resistance, to push beyond the boundaries of what others may regard as not possible.

In this study the role of the 'reformulation of interests' and 'consciousness' in the individual acting as an agent of transformation is discussed within the context of South Africa's current higher

education field. What higher education in South Africa is experiencing now can be described as a consequence of the transformation experienced in 1994, one that urged a reversal of norms, laws, discourses and ways of being that formally excluded Black people and women (see for instance Waghid 2002; Wlope 1995; Beall, Hassim, and Todes 1989). While the hope was that transformation would lead to equality and equal treatment of previously marginalised groups, this has not been the case. While Blacks and women have not been formally excluded from the social and political sphere including universities, for instance the university has embraced more Blacks and women, there still exist subtle forms of discrimination and marginalisation within universities (see Soudien 2010; Cassim 2006; Govinder, Zondo and Makgoba 2013; Portnoi 2009). What has become evident is that there exists a form of exclusion not located in the laws, but located in unwritten rules and institutional cultures that reveals itself in the way people interact, the norms, discourses and practices that guide social action and interaction (CHE 2016; DoE 2008). This kind of exclusion has ensured the delegitimisation of the Black and female body especially in the university through forms of exclusion that have begun to be unraveled and understood by these excluded groups in the university (DoE 2008). This perhaps provides one account of the recent nation-wide student protests and unrest in many South African universities.

In line with the above, I argue that the result of this form of exclusion — one that works both at the institutional level (in the form of institutional racism/exclusion that is often times difficult to identify) and personal level (in localised forms of interaction) is the birth of a unique sociopolitical moment. This moment is one that stems from a lack of satisfaction with the cultural practices (ideationally based) and structural practices (materially based) (Archer 2012, 1; see also McNay 2000, 1) — coupled with what can be described as personal/individual and collective reflexivity. The effect of such a moment is the emergence of a new and different situational context for individuals in the university, including staff and students, for which they have to develop novel ways of confronting such exclusions and marginalisation (see Archer 2012, 1). As there are no prior rules or guidelines with which to confront this new situation, Archer (2012) argues that agents would have to draw on personal and structural properties when it comes to thinking through how to deal with and act within such contexts. In such a situation, the role played by historical contexts in the understanding of everyday personal and political life and experience cannot be underestimated (see New 1994). I argue that drawing on personal and structural properties in order to deal with a novel situation involves a critical personal engagement with one's context which leads to the reformulation of interests — this in turn enables the individual to see or come to consciousness as a vital precursor to taking action.

Existing literature notes the difficulty with transforming structures and the role played by individuals in enabling such transformation. Despite efforts and policies being put in place, transformation in many South African universities is still occurring at a slow pace. Scholars writing on agency (see for instance Archer 1995) — provide one explanation for such difficulty: they argue that those who experience the structures as comfortable will want to reproduce or maintain these structures and those who experience the structures as oppressive will want to change them. My findings revealed that in the South African context this need not necessarily be the case — while it is a fact that those who experience the system as oppressive will want to change it and those who experience the system as comfortable will want to reproduce/ maintain that system — there are however some who experience the structures as oppressive but do nothing and those who experience the structures as comfortable but work at changing them. This points to the fact that the determining factor may not necessarily be one's socio-economic and political position within that system. I argue that the reformulation of interest brought on by the individual's critical personal engagement with their context may provide one explanation for such actions. I draw on Susan Babbitts' (1997, 378) argument for the political role of understanding acquired through personal engagement and activity. I define the reformulation of interests as arising out of one's critical engagement with one's context; the process of such engagement leads to a shift in one's interpretive background (Babbitt 1997) and enables the individual to see and experience things differently. Once interest is reformulated, it opens up the possibility for change and for the individual to take action towards transformation. Taking action towards changing these structures that perpetuate marginalisation even as new entrants are purportedly welcomed into the institution, requires of actors critical engagement with their social context and an understanding of their interests as aligned with transformation of the system rather than its preservation. Once the reformulation of interests occurs, it opens up the possibility for change — for the individual to apprehend information differently; to apprehend the possibility of change; for the shutters to be removed from one's blind spots and for the problems to be seen and a different context imagined.

In addition, Archer argues that given the emergence of a new situational context 'increasingly all have to draw upon their socially dependent but nonetheless personal powers of reflexivity in order to define their course of action in relation to the novelty of their circumstances' (Archer 2012, 1). I argue that taking on and confronting this 'new situational context' especially in South African Universities in such a way that engenders change or results in transformation is indicative of an ability to come to consciousness or see the 'underlying substratum' (practices, processes, ways of being and interacting)

that reproduce oppressive/dominant structures and cultures. I further argue that this points to a kind of reflectivity engaged in by the participants or agents of transformation. 'What each person has to determine is what they are going to do in such situations' (Archer 2012, 1). I argue that the reformulation of interests which indicates the reflexivity of the agents, conditions their actions or their decision to act to transform rather than reproduce. The argument for coming to consciousness brought on by the reformulation of interests and reflexivity is important to taking action that engenders transformation. Such reformulation and reflexivity affords agents the possibility of pursuing as Archer (2012, 1) notes 'what they care most about in the social order' (which can either be reproduction or transformation). Taking this further, critically engaging with one's context, which allows for a shift in one's interpretive background, provides the possibility of pursuing specifically actions that engender transformation. Reformulating one's interests thus allows for a recognition of the way things are, specifically the problems with the way things are -- which can be very difficult to see. Such recognitions condition the agents to redefine their course of action such that it engenders change.

Reformulating interests can be described as the process in which agents are transformed and then act to transform structures. Archer argues that as structures change, the agent is also changed. The subsequent actions taken by these agents engaging in battles both discursively and materially can be described as a reflection of 'changed agents'. I argued that for these participants (agents of transformation), the reformulation of interests, mediated by reflexivity enabled them to take actions deemed transformatory. While reformulating interests can be described as an essence of having agency to effect change, it must be noted that the form or course of action taken by the agent is not always fixed; it is relative and dependent on a host of factors and conditions that are both personal and structural. That is, what makes an individual reformulate her interests is mediated by a number of factors which are structural, cultural and inherent to the individual. On the part of the agent it reveals a reflexive agent and on the structural and cultural side it reveals how context and relations/interactions within specific contexts condition human experiences.

As Archer (1995), Bhaskar (1998), Callinicos (2004) and Giddens (1979) argue, our positions structure our realities and experiences; positions or binary roles (male/female, White/Black, abled/disabled, homosexual/heterosexual, rich/poor) all structure our experiences and what we perceive to be real. We are born into situations that are not of our own making, situations that we do not and cannot choose and these situations/context provide enabling or constraining conditions

depending on where we are within the system of social interaction (New 1994). Because these positions, roles or situations structure our realities, for the most part we are unable to see or know the experience of the 'other' within such systems, for example the White, male lecturer may not understand the power intricacies at play when he stands in front of a noisy class room and there is immediate silence as opposed to a Black, female lecturer who has to spend 10 minutes quieting the class. In that situation a number of factors account for the end result — 'silence' -- however power strategies and relations do play a role in the outcome of the White man or Black woman standing in front of a noisy class. These relations are very subtle and often impossible to see and sometimes when you are the White man or the one who does not experience a noisy classroom or difficulty calming such classes down then you do not think of or question it. We all have blind spots; for the most part we as humans do not question favourable or enabling conditions or the factors that make such conditions enabling. This inability to see is made possible by the normalisation of certain habits, cultures, structures, race, class and gender norms, sexuality and ways of being. Because you are the norm, you cannot see, so that even the Black female heterosexual, may not see the ways in which a simple act of discussing only heterosexual relationships may exclude the Black female lesbian. As Caputo and Yount (1993, 6) note, the strategy of normalisation lies in the production of 'adapted, ambient individuals who move easily through the manifold channels of social relations'. Because we are the norm and our movement is easy, we do not see and we may very well not question.

My point is that for the most part, we are unable to see or know why we experience situations differently from others. Those in a White, male, middle-class and heterosexual position tend to take their freedom within a certain context for granted; they fail to understand how a different body or orientation may experience that same situation differently. This 'normalisation keeps watch over the excessive and exceptional, delimiting the outcast who threatens the order of normalcy' (Caputo and Yount 1993, 6) — so that those outside the norm constantly experience difficulty or constraints. To reformulate interests is to recognise one's blind spots and this leads to a shift in one's interpretive background and the way in which information is apprehended. It is to recognise the 'objective lack' within one's context. The reformulation of interests and shift in an individual's interpretive background enables the individual to come to consciousness. To come to consciousness is to acknowledge, know and understand the power and privilege our positions offer us or allow us because it is from this point that we are able to understand the delegitimising, de-powering and unprivileged position that the 'other' may occupy and the resulting feeling of alienation, exclusion, and marginalisation that the other experiences. Therein lies the transformative potential of agency,

because we are then able to understand not only our own experiences but the experience of the other and this will invariably affect the way we interact in the social system. If we are to transform the university or institution, I argue that it starts from recognising our blind spots, acknowledging the power and privilege accorded us by our positions and being conscious of how that affects our interactions with others in the social system. If we become aware of our position and that of the other, this creates the condition of possibility for change as we are then able to position or reposition ourselves in such a way that allows us to formulate choices and take action that may engender change. To come to consciousness is then to have an individual or personal commitment to the transformation process brought on by being willing to constantly question the relations within our contexts and the ways in which we interact with such contexts. The process of questioning, listening, acknowledgment, acceptance and understanding enables participants to take actions that will enable transformation. The individual who comes to know, to see and to understand becomes committed to the transformation process. Coming to consciousness then means knowing, acknowledging and taking actions that engender change. It is to remove oneself from the norm, it is to be outside the norm. Once one comes to consciousness, one removes oneself from those structures and critiques those practices, processes, discourses and rules that allow for the reproduction of oppressive structures. When you become a knower or come to consciousness, the individual removes him/herself from 'oppressive' relations and tries to change such places or fields. It is the condition of possibility created by a reformulation of interests and coming to consciousness that allows the agent to situate or re-position herself and take action discursively or materially towards change.

Furthermore, these stories reveal the interconnectedness between agency and structure. The participants' experiences reveal how as agents they are consistently and consciously engaged in struggles with structures and structural relations within the university to bring about change. The argument for agency as 'battles' (discursive and material) portrays the relationship between structure and agents in the sense that it illustrates the felt nature of the interaction between agents and structural relations. It also highlights the individual's capacity for choice as it reveals the choices individual agents make amid enabling and limiting conditions in the university. What this means is that agency, rather than being located within the individuals, occurs as a result of interaction with structural and individual relations (see Krause 2011, 300). The idea of agency as individuals engaged in battles then, locates agency not only in the individual but in the interaction between individual actors and other individuals and structures in the wider university (and indeed societal) context. It is in those fractured spaces that agency or action is made possible — or denied. Thus, agency rather than being located in

the individual is a distributed phenomenon, which occurs as a result of interaction among bodies (see Krause 2011) and between bodies, structures and contexts in complex ways. Agency is revealed when interaction takes place, whether it is between agents and structures or between agents and other individuals in a given context (see Krause 2011, 300). Krause (2011, 300) argues that, 'an understanding of agency as an emergent property of interaction rather than something that can be located in specific individuals or groups allows for an examination of the subtle dynamics that perpetuate domination and oppression in ostensibly free societies'.

The academic field which is purported to be a site of intellectual freedom, where physical violence as a form of practice is rejected as Swartz (1997) notes, is nevertheless experienced as embattled and shot through with violent practices. While these forms of violence are seemingly non-existent at the surface, they are in subtle ways embedded in the everyday relations within the University. As Chris notes, 'the university has academics, they are not militant'. Chris's assertion highlights the difficulty with writing about materiality or material battles given the 'liberal' nature of the university. While these narratives spoke about violence and struggles, only in some instances did they highlight specific instances — for the most part what was evident was allusions to these battles. Thus, when Chris speaks about militancy, he speaks about it in the terms of the overt 'militant' racist but this definition can also be extended to the idea of 'subtle militants' as agents of change. The question becomes what conditions enabled this form of overt violence or allowed the inclusion of these forms of violence in an academic field. It seems to be brought on by the new host of possibilities ushered in by the transition to democratic rule (see Archer 1995, 70).

The context of South Africa and by extension universities in South Africa and the level of apartheid violence that enabled the oppression of specific groups, may provide an explanation for the existence of these forms of violence in the present context. There is pressure to transform and change but no prior scripts to read off, rules or guidelines that determine what is right and wrong and what falls within the bounds of professional behaviour, hence different forms of resistance and violence take place. What is significant about Archer's argument is that a new host of possibilities can be utilised by those who want to transform and those who wish to reproduce relations of domination. Also, it seems to be brought on by the various acts of transformation which call into question and resist relations of domination. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005, 832) note that while hegemony does not mean violence, it could be supported by force. The implication of this argument is that violence can be used to maintain hegemony when there is an attempt to transform such relations, thus highlighting

the link between violence and the breakdown of hegemony. Therefore, the act of challenging, resisting and interrupting relations of oppression and dominant ways of being may account for the overt nature of violence present in the University at certain critical moments. While participants' stories revealed discursive modes of having agency to effect change, their stories also revealed material modes of agency — that is outright physical battles that they were engaged in when taking actions that attempted to transform the existing structures and cultures. Battles participants engaged in manifested in both the ways they were materially produced by structural constraints and enablements and the concrete materiality of their responses. Their ability to move between the discursive and material when taking action aimed at transformation points to the strategic competence of the participants.

Additionally, while for some, agency is revealed in the overt voicing of dissent -- in acts of leaving the university which is one common strategy employed by those who cannot see themselves abiding the strictures of the structure -- for others agency is revealed in choosing to be quiet on occasion or retreating to heterotopic spaces where their bruises can heal. It is wearing a mask or a blank face, being quiet on occasion, refusing to engage and choosing which battles to fight, in which way, and in which places. Participants engaging in battles can be described as an effect of a recognition of an objective lack within their context and seeing the need to transform. Recognising, seeing and knowing means you understand the problems and how to respond and are willing to do so even if it means engaging in conflicts that might be bruising and unpleasant. Battles imply not just a potential for action but an actual course of action engaged in by actors in contingent social and material circumstances. Actors' knowledge of the workings of the structure informs actions and engaging in battles points to one mode of taking action. While it is true that structures impose limitations on human action, there is a range of possibilities open to the actor from which s/he can choose even amidst such limitations. To engage in battles is to choose from those possibilities when acting. In the study, the participants' actions revealed how they deployed their agency by their choice of interrupting, challenging, countering discourses, negotiating and persuading to exert change. The choice to fight or engage the space portrays the constraining and enabling aspects of structures and at the same time reveals agentic properties, as individuals deploy various strategies to attain their goals or interests. This highlights a shift in focus from agency as individuals acting alone to agency as individuals acting within specific contexts.

Archer notes that while structures create conditions of constraints and enablements, they do not determine action, rather action is dependent on the agent who chooses a course of action from the array of possibilities available — by 'weighing the opportunity cost' of each possible action, in line with their interests. Being an agent of transformation in a South African context goes beyond choosing from an array of possibilities to pushing beyond those possibilities. As is evident in participants' stories, the decision to stand firm in the face of aggression is a result of a realisation of what the consequences are of not taking action or 'shutting down' and being aggressive. Lewis (1994, 47) writes, 'we must find ways of transforming our personal experiences into the basis for political action' which is what the participants have done. Their agency lies in their response and ability to know, understand and push beyond the possibilities opened up by standing up in-spite of fear and conflicts. These responses cannot be explained in terms of structural conditions alone. In such cases the participants were drawing on personal properties to take action. Hence while structures do condition our experiences, the individual's choice to respond or not and choice of which type of action to take is dependent on personal properties. Therefore having agency to effect transformation has to do with more than the intersection of structural/historical/institutional conditions to include individual factors and personal properties such as perseverance in the face of failure or determination in the face of being shunned whereas another person may respond to such experiences by being silenced or leaving the institution.

To conceptualise agency as 'battles' (fighting in the material and discursive space) far from viewing it as something negative highlights the possibilities opened up by such interactions. Importantly, it draws attention to the ways in which dominant and oppressive social relations within specific contexts work to reproduce themselves discursively and materially. Hence the imperative for agents of transformation to challenge and interrupt such discourses and find strategies to counter resistance to change. I thus do not use the word fight/conflict in a purely negative sense of battles, challenges, interruption and fierce push backs but also in a positive sense of negotiating, persuading, winning hearts and minds and building allegiances. Agency as fighting in the material and discursive space thus reveals the subtle dynamics that allows for reproduction and at the same time the condition for transformation. It reveals how actors deploy strategic action and push beyond the boundaries and limits of what is possible to engage various spaces which may in turn lead to a change in the social system.

Agency is thus understood as taking place in the interaction between agents in specific contexts. The hermeneutic phenomenological perspective taken here sees agency unfolding through the experiences of people who find themselves situated in specific contexts (Parkins 2000, 62). It examines the actions of individuals as embedded within their structural relations and interactions. The stories that are told here reveal participants' engagement with structures and how understanding of such structures activated their agency — what is described here as 'strategic competence' based on this knowledge and understanding. The university as an institution is understood here as fractured — characterised by differing interests, powers and goals which leads to conflicts within the system. Agents react to, and interact with, these conflicts in varying ways, depending on their own consciousness, goals and interests.

In South Africa, the imperative to transform provided the conditions within which agents take action. While there are still comfortable spaces for the 'racist' types in some historically white universities, these spaces are increasingly becoming smaller and quite uncomfortable — the choice then becomes either becoming silent and retreating into the backgrounds or becoming vocal and taking actions towards change. For those who retreat into the background, it is not that they stop being racist but such racism is now more subtle and nuanced, difficult to pinpoint. So while it seems like the level of racism is low and there seems to be transformation, the stories of deeply uncomfortable moments by the marginalised are prevalent. Given this, those who seek change do not necessarily or even mostly work at these overt levels but have to work below the surface on a subtle level by fighting discursively and strategically. The fact that universities are not openly racist and exclusionary does not mean racism and exclusion are non-existent; in fact such structures and cultures are able to maintain themselves because they work in the shadows. Though a difficult process, because pre 1994 racism was overt and easy to pinpoint, it was easy to take directed open actions and implement specific rules, agendas and policies. However in post 1994 South Africa, in order to maintain themselves such structures, cultures and practices have relegated themselves to the background and work in the shadows. So in order for agents of change to work at this level, they have to also work at the level of discourses, at times choosing themselves to operate in the shadows. Of course, while racism and sexism does work in the shadows, there are also some instances of overt racism and sexism where agents have to also engage at the overt/material level as highlighted above.

Therefore, agents of change experience constraints and enablements which are in part produced by the historical context – and for women constraints and enablements are often experienced as inscribed

on/through their bodies. Because the institutional and historical context of South Africa as a whole has been violent towards women and Blacks, agents of change who are women and Blacks more often than not experience this violence mediated through the ways in which their corporeality is constructed as 'other' in the university. Agents of change encounter resistance which may be subtle or violent and they sometimes have to respond accordingly. In South African universities, having freedom or agency to enact change is contingent on certain bodies where your race and gender, in particular the assumptions and constructions concerning them, is tied to the individual's ability to take action to effect change. For instance, having access to enough funds or being able to persuade/influence the governing body is tied to race and gender where Whites and men in particular have privileged access to resources. Participants' ability to effect transformation is located in their ability to access resources and the ability to influence the decision-making process. Given the context of apartheid legacies and the fact that these structures were created to serve a specific group, it meant that some participants experienced structures as more enabling than constraining and others experienced them as more constraining than enabling. The implication of this is that while personal properties do play a role in the transformation process, the ability to act is always affected by the structural conditions within that context. Even though an individual might be willing to or might want to change such structures, they are able to depending on a host of factors including context, race, gender, class and positions within the university.

The implication of this is that in a society where patriarchy and sexism are deeply entrenched, women's bodies are used in particular ways when there is resistance to transformation and this is not the case for men. These bodies though occupying an invisible or a marginal role in the university, become (hyper) visible when there is resistance to transformation. The fact that the ability or capacity to effect transformation is still contingent on certain bodies, is a problem, given the imperative to transform. What this reflects is the continued pervasiveness of sexism and patriarchy in the institutional culture of the university. If we are to change such cultures, individuals in the university must be made aware of the need to transform – must become aware of how bodies are placed differentially in seemingly neutral contexts such as lecture theatres and administrative gatherings. Absent such an awareness, being told to transform, being told what to do or given a list on how to transform is unlikely to be effective in ensuring transformation.

To take action to effect transformation, one must recognise that there is a problem with the set of relations within a context and see the relations of domination that exist within that context. It is nearly

impossible for one to come to understand the need to take actions to effect transformation without seeing the problems or recognising the objective lack within that context. Whether the individual occupies the position of the dominant or oppressed, if the individual does not see the problems within that context and is unable to perceive a different set of relations — where people are treated equally and fairly, where individual differences are recognised and taken into account when decisions are being made about who to include when making decisions about transformation in the university — no progress will be made towards transformation. Changing the institutional culture goes beyond changing the way things are done, it involves changing the mindsets of actors (Fourie 1999; Ogude, Nel and Oodthuizen 2005) and getting every individual within the university to see and acknowledge that there is something fundamentally wrong with the structure, cultures and practices in the university and to imagine a different set of relations. This means reformulating interests and coming to consciousness of the need to effect transformation, it is only in the context of that, that it becomes possible to take action, to engage in battles in order to effect change.

Archer (1995, 70) argues that as transformation and social change occurs, current structures are not just replaced but a new host of possibilities is introduced. The transition from apartheid to democratic rule, opened up an array of possibilities within South African universities, what these stories reveal is individuals engaged in pushing the boundaries of these 'new possibilities' by engaging in battles both discursive and material to enable transformation. They push such boundaries by challenging, persuading, battling and countering oppressive, dominant and marginalising practices and ways of being in the university. They have these experiences because they are pioneering/introducing something completely new in the university. While the transition created new possibilities which agents push by introducing new ways of being, these actions further create new structural possibilities which new entrants have to engage with. What is perhaps important is as these possibilities are created, they shift the ways in which specific groups experience the structures. Where for instance one group experiences the structures as enabling, then slowly comes to experience them as constraining as structures are transformed and vice versa. Agency thus implies a constant shift of power relations, where agents embroiled in discursive and material struggles, take up different positions in a bid to effect transformation. Agency to effect transformation can be described as the ability of agents to push the boundary of what is possible and legitimate within the university. To be an agent is to move between an array of possibilities, to move between power and powerlessness. Agency then allows for a constant shift as actors explore the possibilities for change by recognising

blind spots, reformulating their interests, coming to consciousness and engaging in discursive and material battles.

Transformation is a constant process of struggle, it is a simultaneous, cyclical process where both agents and structures change. It is almost impossible to have a transformed (end) state — as agents act to change structures, so also do the limiting and enabling condition that they experience change them. First agents are changed in the process of reformulating their interests and coming to consciousness — which provides the condition for taking action. It is the process of critical engagement (which does not stop) that enables this transformation. The subsequent actions taken to effect change also changes the actor while simultaneously changing the structure. It is the experience of resistance and successes and reflecting on them that ensures the transformation of both the agent and structure. Having agency to effect transformation can thus be described as a cyclical process where agents move between power and powerlessness as they take action aimed at transformation within specific contexts.

8.2 Limitations and areas for further research

One of the limitations was the focus of the project on individuals who have taken actions aimed at transformation. Participants were able to provide information on the actions they have taken towards transformation and reflected on what enabled or hindered their ability to take such actions. While this proved immensely beneficial in answering the research question and enabled an understanding of agency, it would be useful in future to conduct research that compares the experiences of those who have taken action and those who have not to understand the relationship between the two and to discover if new insight might be gained on what enables individuals to, and not to, take action towards transformation. While the pilot study may in part address these issues, no in-depth analysis comparing the two is provided in the present work and doing this may open up new ideas.

A second lies in the fact that disseminating my interpretation of the data to participants proved difficult as their academic and non-academic commitments left little time to engage in detailed conversations about the data or my interpretations of the data. Thus, I had to summarise my interpretations to try to ensure feedback. Participants had neither the time nor the inclination to engage with the full data set. Had a mechanism been found to ensure that they did so, the analysis might well have been further enriched.

Third, the study focused on collecting data from one research site which was a historically white university. Further research may explore the issue of having agency to effect transformation by collecting data from various sites and by exploring the differences or similarities in the experiences of academics in HBU's and HWU's.

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Appendix A: Letter to Participants

Letter of Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Grace Idahosa, a doctoral candidate of the Department of Politics and International Studies, Rhodes University. I am a part of the institutional cultural group being supervised by Prof Louise Vincent. The focus of my thesis is on the experiences of individual agents and their efforts at transformation.

The relationship between structure and agency, the human agent's capacity for action and the degree of limitation placed on such capacity for action by structural power or social structures is perhaps the central problem of social science. While agents have a capacity to act on their own free will, their ability to carry out such acts is dependent on their historical contexts and the social structures that prevail in such contexts.

The purpose of this research then is to understand how individuals who are seen to be influential deploy their agency to enable transformation amid limiting and enabling structures and how they were able negotiate such limiting and enabling structures and cultures.

I am interested in hearing the story of your capacity to act as an agent, your understanding of those experiences and the meaning they hold for you. If you are willing to participate, I would love to interview you. I will be conducting in-depth open-ended interview, which may last for about an hour and half. The interviews will cover the context of your experiences and meanings these experiences hold for you (your understanding of these events and how they have impacted on you as an individual), how you were able to negotiate limiting structures and cultures and how you were able to use the resources available to ensure change. I would like you to be part of my research and would be grateful if my request is granted.

I am aware of your very busy schedule, and would be available to interview you at your convenience. If you are interested in participating in my research please let me know what time is convenient for you and where I can meet you.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix B: Letter to participants from pilot study

Letter of Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam

I am Grace Idahosa, a doctoral candidate of the Department of Politics and International Studies, Rhodes University. The focus of my thesis is on how transformations happens and understand the experiences of individuals in departments viewed to have been transformed. The purpose of this research is to understand how individuals in departments that are viewed to be transformation have the agency to enable transformation. Individuals perception of what a transformed department looks like, how the transformation process happened and how did such individuals negotiate limiting and enabling structures and cultures to enable transformation.

In order to achieve this, I need to interview staff in departments viewed to be transformed. I would love to hear your experience of agency in a department viewed to be transformed. Agency here is seen as the capacity of an individual to act in their own right. I am interested in hearing your story of being in a transformed department, your capacity to act as an agent, your understanding of those experiences and the meaning they hold for you. If you are willing to participate, I would love to interview you. For my research, I will be conducting in-depth open-ended interview, which may last for about an hour and half. The interviews will cover the context of your experiences and meanings these experiences hold for you (your understanding of these events and how they have impacted on you as an individual), how you were able to negotiate limiting structures and cultures and how you were able to use the resources available to ensure change. I would like you to be part of my research and would be grateful if my request is granted. If you are interested in participating in my research please email me at g12i6873@campus.ru.ac.za or idahosagrace@gmail.com and let me know what time is convenient for you and where I can meet you. I want to point out that this research is confidential and information will only be provided to the researcher (me) and my supervisor. Thanks for your cooperation

Regards

Idahosa Grace

Appendix C: Letter from Institutional Culture Office Commissioning the Pilot Study

RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EQUITY & INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE OFFICE
• Tel: (046) 603 7474 • Fax: (046) 603 7561 • n.nhlapo@ru.ac.za

21 July 2014

Dear Colleague

I write to request you to participate in a study commissioned by the Equity and Institutional Culture Office. The study will, it is anticipated, help us better understand how departmental level practices contribute to or hinder the transformation of the institution at this level. The research will require an hour of your time during which you will be interviewed about your experiences and perceptions of your department's practices as pertinent to the institution's transformation effort.

The Equity and Institutional Culture Office is based in the Vice Chancellorate and has, as its mandate, three main responsibilities. These are:

- Promoting a shared appreciation of equality, equity and human rights and of the entailed institutional imperatives and priorities.

- Enabling various stake holders to contribute towards the realization of strategies that will transform the broad culture of the institution and foster a broad institutional culture whose teaching and learning, research, admissions, employment, and other practices are informed by a shared understanding and appreciation of equality, equity and human rights. This includes conducting analyses of how institutional practices promote or hinder the achievement of transformation related strategies and policies.

- Monitoring the implementation of the institution's transformation strategies and policies. This includes identifying structural, systemic and other barriers that undermine the achievement of the goal of transformation. It also includes ensuring that appropriate records and statistics are kept and relevant reports are prepared.

As part of pursuing the task of conducting analyses of institutional practices in order to understand how transformation can best be achieved, a study of three departments is being undertaken. Your department is one of three departments that are taking part in the study. Professor Vincent and Grace Idahosa have been commissioned by the office to conduct this research.

In accordance with usual ethical requirements all participation is voluntary and anonymous. Transcribed data will not be linked with the names of participants and personal details to the extent that they emerge in interview will be altered in such a way as to preserve anonymity without changing meaning. No person other than the interviewer herself will be aware of the identity of any participant.

Should you require further information about the study or information about your solicited participation, please email me at n.nhlapo@ru.ac.za or Professor Vincent at louise.dorothy.vincent@gmail.com

Thank you in anticipation of your kind response.

Yours sincerely

Noluxolo Nhlapo

DIRECTOR: Equity and Institutional Culture
Room 204, Administration Building
Rhodes University
P O Box 94
Grahamstown 6139

Tel: 046 603 7474. Fax 046 603 7561. email: n.nhlapo@ru.ac.za

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form

I _____agree to participate in the research project of Idahosa Grace on transformation and agency.

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a (PhD) degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted on 0610039031 (cell phone) or idahosagrace@gmail.com (email). The research project has been approved by the relevant ethics committee, and is under the supervision of Prof Louise Vincent in the Politics Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on __0466038353_ (office) or l.vincent@ru.ac.za (email).
2. Participation will involve being interviewed for a duration of about one hour per interview.
3. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
4. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.
5. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time should I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
6. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader.
7. Any published research emanating from the study will be fully anonymised and the identity of the participant protected.
8. No person other than the researcher will be aware of the identity of any participant, strict confidentiality procedures will be adhered to in the collection, analysis and storage of data.

Signed on (Date):

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____

Appendix E: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself-background?
2. Given the legacy of apartheid Universities are expected to transform many aspects of their practices. This may range from including those previously marginalised and excluded to changing how we teach, what we teach, how we research, what we research, how we relate to one another, the built environment and so on. I am interested in people who have been able to bring about changes, however large or small and what has aided them and what if any have been the obstacles they have faced.
3. Question: Can you recall an incident or incidents or examples when you implemented actions, programmes or were a catalyst for such actions that made a contribution to a transformed institution rather than business as usual?
4. What in your opinion would you say lead to your taking such action, implementing such programmes?
5. What affected the successful implementation of such programme?
6. As a White/Black man/woman, do you feel you are more in a position/less in a position to effect transformatory actions – or is your race and gender irrelevant?
7. Do you feel that you personally have the power to act in order to make sure that previously marginalised people such as Black people and especially Black women are no longer marginalised?
8. What gives you this power? What limits your power? Can you think of a time when you have had an opportunity to act and tell me about it?

Appendix F: Letter to Participants on my findings and analysis

Dear Sir/Madame

Update on Grace Idahosa's research on agency and transformation

Good day, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for taking part in my research. I have done my analysis and I am now writing my thesis. Since my research question focuses on interpreting the experience of having agency to effect transformation — a requirement of my methodology (hermeneutic phenomenology) is sharing my research findings with my participants, what is called participant checking to allow for a degree of negotiation of the meaning ascribed to, and interpretation of, the participants' experiences. I have attached the document which summarizes my findings, specifically my analytical chapters. I would love to hear your thoughts on the findings and if they resonate with your experiences.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Kind Regard
Grace Idahosa

Appendix G: Key Policy Initiatives

Key policy initiatives and processes 1990-2006

INITIATIVE/ PROCESS	EVENT/ACTIVITY/PRODUCT	OUTCOME/S
African National Congress (ANC) aligned mass movement, the National Education Co-ordinating Committee initiates development of policy proposals	Establishment of a 'civil society' initiative – the National Education Policy Investigation (1990 -1992). Publication of a Framework and Post-Secondary Education report	Feeds into ANC policy initiatives and policy statements
Policy development by the ANC and ANC supporting formations	Policy proposals developed by the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations, Education Policy Unit (University of Western Cape) and other formations ANC 1994 policy statement on higher education	Feed into ANC policy development Establishes principles and values for further policy development
Establishment in 1995 of National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) to investigate all aspects of HE and make policy recommendations	Publication in 1996 of report, '*A Framework for Transformation*'	NCHE report feeds into Ministry of Education policy and legislative development processes

Ministry initiatives in 1997 to develop *Green Paper* on HE, *White Paper* on HE and legislation	Release of *Green Paper* Release and adoption of *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation Of Higher Education'* Release of a *Bill* on Higher Education and eventual adoption of the *Higher Education Act*, No. 101 of 1997	*Green Paper* feeds into *White Paper* *White Paper* feeds into the *Higher Education Act* New legal framework for HE and *Act* shapes Ministry regulations
Public call for nominations to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (1998)	Establishment of the CHE to advise (on request and proactively) the Minister on all matters related to HE , to undertake quality assurance activities through the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), to report annually to Parliament on the state of HE, to monitor achievement of policy goals, to convene an annual consultative conference of national stakeholders and to contribute to HE development through publications and conferences	CHE undertakes an expanding range of activities related to its mandate through a Secretariat of 35 persons
National and institutional initiatives around planning (1998 onwards)	Development by Ministry of institutional planning guidelines	Development by institutions of strategic and three-year institutional plans

Ministry initiative to develop new goal-oriented funding policy framework (1998 onwards)	Development by Ministry of draft funding policy framework documents Publication by Ministry in 2001 of Discussion Document, *Funding of Public Higher Education: A New Framework* Ministry seeks advice from CHE on equalisation of C values in subsidy formula	Public response and work towards a final funding policy CHE advises to equalise and Ministry accepts advice
Requirement for HE qualifications to be registered on National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and for programmes to be restructured in outcomes based format (1997 onwards)	Extensive curriculum and programme restructuring	All HE qualifications interim registered on NQF and developed in outcomes based format
Ministry initiatives around private higher education (1998 onwards)	Development of guidelines and manuals for registration of private HE providers Amendment in 2000 and 2001 to the *Higher Education Act* Development of draft regulations for registration of private HE providers	Registration of all private providers of HE New regulatory framework for private HE through regulation of April 2003

Requirement that all new HE programmes be accredited as condition of provision and public funding support (1998 onwards)	Development of interim frameworks, processes, criteria and structures for the accreditation of programmes	Processing of and decision making on new programmes by HEQC; Processing of and decision making on re-accreditation of conditionally registered programmes of private HE institutions

Initiative to institute national quality assurance (1999 onwards)	Work towards establishment of infrastructure for HEQC and the launch of HEQC	HEQC formally launched in 2000
	Development of policy framework for quality assurance in HE	Release of draft and final policy *Founding Document* on quality assurance
	Work towards new system, criteria, processes, guidelines and manuals for programme accreditation in consultation with stakeholders	Release of *Accreditation Framework Discussion Document* and thereafter finalisation of a new accreditation system for implementation in 2004
	Work to establish system of self-evaluations and institutional audits in consultation with stakeholders	Release of *Institutional Audit Framework Discussion Document* & thereafter criteria for Institutional Audits
		Institution of pilot audits of two public and one private institution in late 2003 with audits to begin in late 2004
		One day visits by HEQC to all public HE institutions and a sample of private institutions around work of the HEQC and internal quality

		management systems of institutions
		Formation of national HEQC Quality Assurance Managers Forum
	Initiation of quality promotion and capacity building initiatives and move to establish a Quality Assurance Innovation and Development Fund	Establishment of a Teaching and Learning project to promote quality through developing good practice guides on a range of issues
		Training of audit chairs and panel members, programme evaluators and HEQC staff
		Undertaking of re-accreditation of about 50 MBA programmes at over 20 institutions using panels of specialist local and international evaluators
	Project established to develop processes and criteria for reviewing and re-accrediting all Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes in consultation with MBA providers	Development of frameworks and criteria for quality assurance of research

	Project on quality assurance of research	

Initiative in 1998 to consolidate and extend student financial aid to needy students	Passing of the *National Students Financial Aid Scheme Act* of 1999	Creation of a body to implement support for needy students Funds enlarged annually and support about 200 000 needy undergraduate students
Initiative in 1999 to develop new academic policy for the structure, duration and nomenclature of qualifications and programmes	Production in 2001 by CHE of *A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education* Discussion Document	Public comment and steps towards finalisation by the Ministry of New Academic Policy in 2003
Initiatives to bring colleges (education, agricultural and nursing) into the national higher education system (1998 onwards)	Task Team to effect incorporation of all education colleges into universities and technikons Task Teams to examine agricultural and nursing colleges	No more independent colleges of education - incorporated into universities and technikons Reports produced - no final decisions on future

Initiatives on restructuring the HE institutional landscape (1999 onwards)	Ministry request to CHE to provide advice on restructuring the HE institutional landscape	Extensive debate generated around proposals and restructuring
	Release of CHE report: *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the Twenty-First Century (2000)*	Ministry response to CHE through its *National Plan for Higher Education* (2001), which initiates mergers of some institutions and establishes a National Working Group (NWG) to investigate and advise on appropriate arrangements to consolidate the provision of higher education on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including the feasibility of reducing a number of higher education institutions.
		Amendment approved by Parliament
	Bill to amend *Higher Education Act* in 2001 to give the Minister power to set scope of provision by public and private institutions	Ministry releases its own slightly modified proposals on institutional restructuring and

		requests advice from CHE and public comments
	NWG releases its report (2002) *The Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South Africa* - proposes to reduce current 36 institutions to 21 through mergers, though with no loss of sites of provision Ministry considers public submissions and CHE advice and submits proposals on institutional restructuring for Cabinet approval Ministry creates a Merger Unit and releases 'Guidelines' for merging institutions (early 2003) Ministry requests institutions to submit their proposed programme and qualification mixes and niche areas	Government approves in late 2002 Ministry proposals to reduce the 36 public institutions to 21 through mergers and incorporations. New 'comprehensive' institution created through the mergers of a university and technikon Ministry processes submissions and releases for comment its proposed qualification and programme mixes and niche areas for institutions

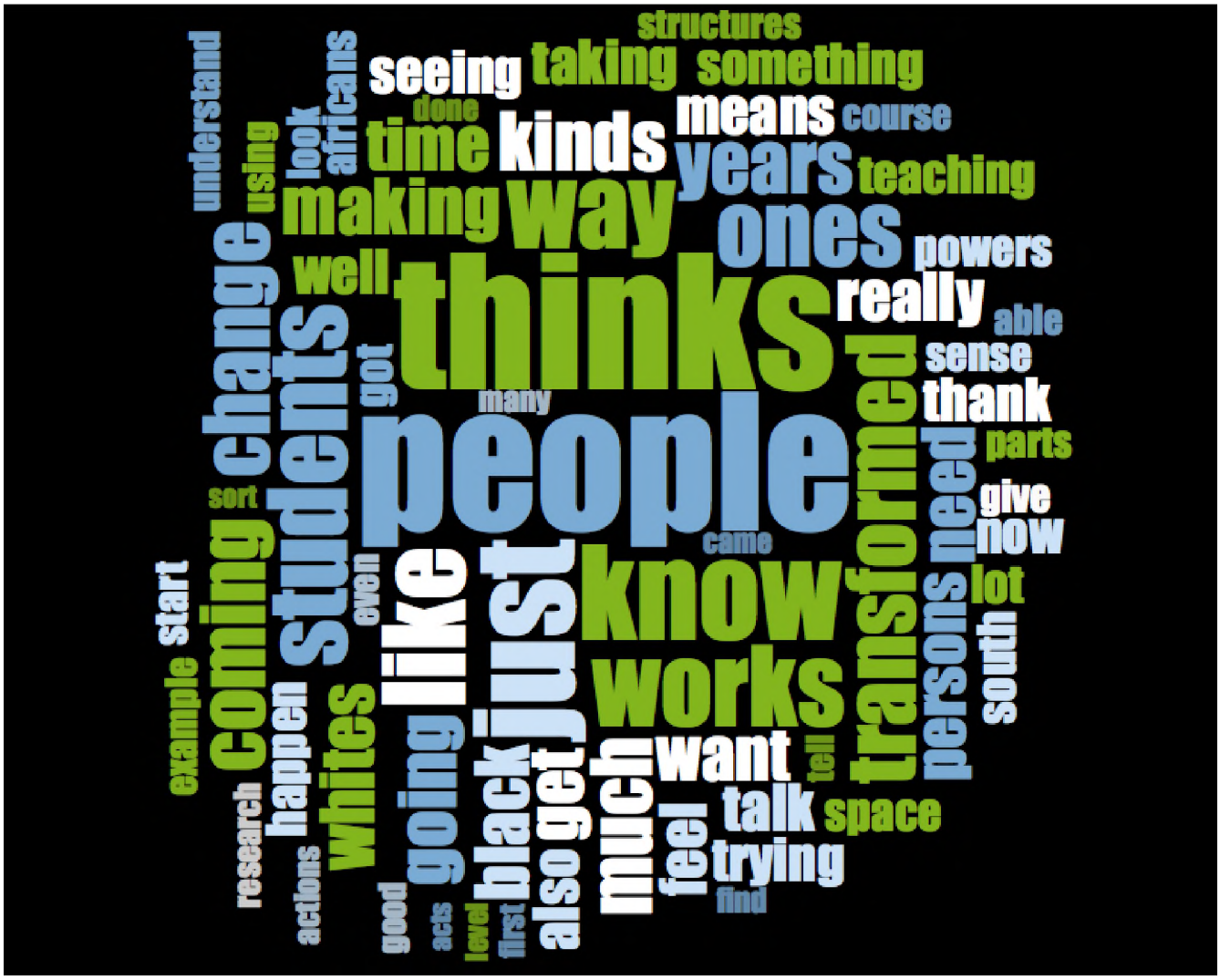
Initiative in 2000 around language policy for HE with request from Ministry for CHE advice	CHE produces policy advice report for Minister in 2001 Minister appoints a group to report specifically on the Afrikaans language in higher education	Ministry releases Language Policy for Higher Education in late 2002, based essentially on the CHE advice
Initiative around reviewing the NQF in HE (2001)	Ministry's of Education and Labour establish a Study Team to review the NQF in education CHE and various HE actors motivate for major changes in the implementation of the NQF in HE	Ministry's decisions awaited in response to proposals of the Study Team
Initiative to review co-operative governance in HE (2001)	CHE Task Team conducts investigation in light of various problems at numerous institutions CHE releases Research Report and Policy Report with some 20 recommendations for comment	Amendment to *Higher Education Act* in 2002 to reduce the size of Council's of institutions CHE advice to the Ministry in mid-2003
Ministry request to CHE for advice on various aspects of the provision of distance education in HE	CHE establishes a Task Team comprising national and international specialists which conducts investigations on a range of issues and calls for representations from all stakeholders	CHE advice to the Ministry in late 2003

Ministry request to CHE for advice on the nomenclature of proposed comprehensive institutions Ministry request to CHE for advice on the criteria and conditions for institutions to use the terms 'university', 'technikon', 'college' and to offer/award degrees and postgraduate qualifications	CHE advises Minister on the nomenclature of proposed comprehensive institutions CHE establishes investigation under auspices of its Shape and Size Standing Committee	Ministry accepts advice that all comprehensive institutions should provisionally be called universities and that final decisions should await the results of its investigation CHE advice to the Ministry in late 2003
Ministry request to CHE for advice on the General Agreement on Trade and Services and HE and claims made on South Africa by four countries	CHE initiates debate through its journal, *Kagisano*, commissions work and convenes a national seminar	CHE advises the Ministry in mid-2003
Ministry proposes new goal-directed funding framework (2004)	Consultations with key stakeholders and advice by CHE	Ministry introduces new goal-directed funding framework with a migration plan over 3 years
Ministry releases discussion document on Higher Education Qualifications Framework (2004)	Consultations with key stakeholders and advice by CHE	Ministry decision pending

Ministry proposes new policy on admissions to higher education through the Further Education and Training Certificate (2005)	Consultations with key stakeholders and advice by CHE	Ministry introduces new National General Certificate
Ministry proposes enrolment planning for higher education institutions	Consultations with key stakeholders on proposed new funding framework; advice by CHE on proposed new funding framework	Ministry engagement with institutions

SALEM BADAT 2003 & 2007

Appendix H: Word Frequency Search - Cloud



Appendix I: Classification of Universities

Table 2. (cont.)

Categories	*Institutions included*	*Key characteristics up to 1994*	*Historically advantaged/ disadvantaged*
(4) Historically black technikons: TBVC	Border Technikon, Eastern Cape Technikon, North West Technikon	• Perceived as extensions of civil service of 'independent republics' • Small institutions with primary focus on vocational training	Historically disadvantaged
(5) Historically white (Afrikaans) universities: RSA	University of the Orange Free State, University of Port Elizabeth, University of Pretoria, Potchefstroom University, Rand Afrikaans University, University of Stellenbosch	• Authoritarian institutions which supported the apartheid government • Good management and administrative systems in place • Intellectual agenda affected by instrumentalist commitments and by the severing of contacts with international academics during the academic boycott in the 1980s.	Historically advantaged
(6) Historically white (English) universities: RSA	University of Cape Town, University of Natal, Rhodes University, University of the Witwatersrand	• Did not support apartheid government • Collegial institutions at top levels of senate and heads of academic departments, but authoritarian at lower levels • Good management and administrative systems in place • Intellectual agendas set by commitments to knowledge as a good in itself, and strong international disciplinary teaching and research links.	Historically advantaged

Table 2. Classification of public universities and technikons by racial origin and by historical advantage/disadvantage: 1994

Categories	*Institutions included*	*Key characteristics up to 1994*	*Historically advantaged/ disadvantaged*
(1) Historically black universities: RSA	University of Durban-Westville, Medunsa University, University of the North, Vista University, University of the Western Cape, University of Zululand	• Top management originally supportive of apartheid government • Originally authoritarian institutions, which became sites of anti-apartheid struggle during the course of the 1980s • Intellectual agenda determined by instrumentalist notion of knowledge and function being that of training 'useful black graduates'.	Historically disadvantaged
(2) Historically black universities: TBVC	University of Fort Hare, North West University, University of Transkei, Venda University	• Perceived in 1980s as extensions of civil service of 'independent republics' • Authoritarian institutions which became sites of anti-apartheid struggle at the beginning of the 1990s • Intellectual agenda determined by instrumentalist notion of knowledge and function being that of training 'useful graduates' for 'independent republics'.	Historically disadvantaged
(3) Historically black technikons: RSA	ML Sultan Technikon, Mangosuthu Technikon, Technikon Northern Transvaal, Peninsula Technikon	• Top management originally supportive of apartheid government • Authoritarian institutions, which became sites of anti-apartheid struggle in the early 1990s • Intellectual agendas determined by instrumentalist commitment to vocational training	Historically disadvantaged

Categories	*Institutions included*	*Key characteristics up to 1994*	*Historically advantaged/ disadvantaged*
(6) Historically white technikons: RSA	Cape Technikon, Free State Technikon, Natal Technikon, Port Elizabeth Technikon, Pretoria Technikon, Vaal Triangle Technikon, Technikon Witwatersrand	• Authoritarian institutions which supported the apartheid government • Intellectual agendas determined by instrumentalist commitments to vocational training.	Historically advantaged
(7) Distance education universities and technikons	University of South Africa (Unisa), Technikon South Africa (TSA)	• Authoritarian institutions which supported the apartheid government • Unisa: instrumentalist intellectual agenda with little outward or international focus on teaching and research • TSA: primary focus on vocational education.	Historically advantaged

Ian Bunting (2006, 49-51)

Appendix J: Codes

Name	Memo Link	Sources	References	Created On	Created By
Limiting processes	Yes	9	17	26 Nov 2015, 17:18:53	GEI
Challenges		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 14:27:12	GEI
Experience of space		6	11	28 Nov 2015, 00:45:20	GEI
Experience of time		3	3	28 Nov 2015, 00:45:43	GEI
Power		1	2	26 Nov 2015, 17:06:18	GEI
Power as limiting		2	3	26 Nov 2015, 17:08:13	GEI
Power of persuasion		2	3	26 Nov 2015, 17:06:59	GEI
Race		3	7	26 Nov 2015, 16:36:36	GEI

Responsibility as power		2	3	26 Nov 2015, 17:11:16	GEI
Process coding		**0**	**0**	**28 Nov 2015, 00:42:23**	**GEI**
Adapting to a new way of doing		2	2	29 Nov 2015, 20:40:04	GEI
Assumptions		1	2	23 May 2016, 05:03:29	GEI
Battles	Yes	13	56	05 May 2016, 09:05:22	GEI
Absent traces of battles		11	23	18 May 2016, 12:06:53	GEI
Loan Wolves		1	1	19 May 2016, 10:44:27	GEI
Attitude	Yes	2	2	11 Dec 2015, 12:28:47	GEI
Being a resource	Yes	1	2	17 Dec 2015, 13:03:28	GEI
Burden of a few		1	2	17 Dec 2015, 11:49:19	GEI

Capital	Yes	2	6	06 Dec 2015, 18:08:27	GEI
Having Access		3	3	02 Dec 2015, 08:39:34	GEI
Exclusion		1	1	10 Dec 2015, 16:02:40	GEI
Fields as sites of struggles		7	15	05 May 2016, 12:54:37	GEI
Giant fight		1	1	06 May 2016, 13:08:40	GEI
Guilt		1	1	20 May 2016, 17:13:14	GEI
Insisting		1	1	06 May 2016, 11:07:51	GEI
Legitimising thru demonstration	Yes	1	1	05 May 2016, 10:38:51	GEI
Material Production		7	20	05 May 2016, 10:44:36	GEI
Addressing the substratum		1	2	10 May 2016, 09:33:13	GEI

Conflating skin colour with agency		1	1	06 May 2016, 11:39:34	GEI
Environment		3	4	17 Dec 2015, 17:00:07	GEI
Financial resources	Yes	8	12	28 Nov 2015, 03:49:57	GEI
Freedom-embodiment	Yes	1	1	10 Dec 2015, 17:08:11	GEI
Performing and Un-performing		1	1	18 May 2016, 12:34:32	GEI
Production through skin colour		1	2	06 May 2016, 12:27:39	GEI
The role of women and Blacks	Yes	1	1	18 May 2016, 12:46:08	GEI
No collaborations		2	3	05 May 2016, 11:37:19	GEI
Pushing past constructions		1	1	06 May 2016, 11:57:02	GEI
Struggle for legitimation		1	1	23 May 2016, 08:40:44	GEI

The tension between theory and practice		2	5	06 May 2016, 11:09:46	GEI
Working though the structures		1	1	06 May 2016, 12:37:51	GEI
Working through conservative spaces		1	1	06 May 2016, 12:38:56	GEI
Being efficacious		11	20	30 Nov 2015, 17:08:28	GEI
Being optimistic		3	3	29 Nov 2015, 22:18:22	GEI
Circumventing structures		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:51:33	GEI
Establishing credentials		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 01:48:12	GEI
Facilitating-Using power		3	6	30 Nov 2015, 11:51:38	GEI
Providing encouragement]		2	4	28 Nov 2015, 00:55:08	GEI
Facing challenges		3	3	28 Nov 2015, 01:25:33	GEI

Fighting in the discursive space	Yes	15	65	28 Nov 2015, 00:42:02	GEI
Challenging-Interrupting discourse		10	32	28 Nov 2015, 03:10:24	GEI
Intervening in spaces		2	2	29 Nov 2015, 16:04:37	GEI
Rejecting comfortable spaces		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 22:07:49	GEI
Rejecting the White bubble		3	4	29 Nov 2015, 22:13:18	GEI
Determination		3	4	06 Dec 2015, 18:09:34	GEI
Breaking the ceiling		1	1	07 Dec 2015, 12:50:28	GEI
Discourses		1	2	17 Dec 2015, 16:23:15	GEI
different discursive space		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:09:11	GEI
Discursive agency		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:05:42	GEI

Flying the flag		2	5	01 Dec 2015, 17:38:40	GEI
Having thick skin		1	1	17 Dec 2015, 17:08:05	GEI
Struggling		2	2	01 Dec 2015, 17:47:13	GEI
Fractured Space		1	2	10 Dec 2015, 16:06:29	GEI
Being the odd one	Yes	2	5	17 Dec 2015, 10:28:01	GEI
Individualistic culture		1	1	14 Dec 2015, 21:01:42	GEI
Interests		2	2	06 Dec 2015, 08:33:56	GEI
Intimidating spaces		1	4	05 Dec 2015, 17:08:03	GEI
Working in an unstable space		1	1	07 Dec 2015, 12:11:14	GEI
Intimidating environment		2	2	11 Dec 2015, 12:48:24	GEI

Juggling		1	1	17 Dec 2015, 13:05:51	GEI
Knowing the ropes Experience	Yes	3	7	27 Nov 2015, 12:38:18	GEI
Legitimising ones voice		1	2	28 Nov 2015, 02:24:49	GEI
Negotiating strange and weird spaces		3	3	29 Nov 2015, 23:22:27	GEI
Power of persuasion		10	32	27 Nov 2015, 15:49:09	GEI
Difficulty convincing odderl colleagues		1	2	27 Nov 2015, 13:48:25	GEI
Negotiating		2	2	08 Dec 2015, 10:47:00	GEI
Finding a middle ground		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 01:41:19	GEI
Not compromising		1	1	17 Dec 2015, 17:20:50	GEI
Winning hearts and minds		1	2	29 Nov 2015, 20:50:02	GEI

Proving oneself		2	2	28 Nov 2015, 02:59:18	GEI
Resisting intellectually	Yes	9	29	29 Nov 2015, 21:07:59	GEI
Being delegitimised	Yes	1	2	06 Dec 2015, 08:21:10	GEI
Evading		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 14:50:32	GEI
Experiencing difficulty with race and gender		3	3	27 Nov 2015, 16:48:08	GEI
Managing Fear		1	4	11 Dec 2015, 15:27:59	GEI
Strategic competence		12	40	28 Nov 2015, 03:54:24	GEI
Building allegiance	Yes	10	25	28 Nov 2015, 01:09:38	GEI
Creating creative spaces	Yes	10	28	29 Nov 2015, 15:32:03	GEI
Carving my way		1	1	02 Dec 2015, 11:34:09	GEI

Creating solutions		1	1	06 Dec 2015, 17:42:45	GEI
Finding an enabling space		7	19	28 Nov 2015, 03:45:34	GEI
Not having a clue		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 14:10:38	GEI
Finding Solutions		2	2	06 Dec 2015, 15:06:35	GEI
Finding spaces		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 04:04:20	GEI
Opening up spaces		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 15:34:20	GEI
Using ones strength		1	1	07 Dec 2015, 12:38:43	GEI
Using structural powers to activate structural mechanisms		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:43:30	GEI
Giving attention		1	1	17 Dec 2015, 14:54:39	GEI
Having role models		2	2	11 Dec 2015, 15:22:31	GEI

Lacking Agency		1	3	10 Dec 2015, 14:41:48	GEI
Leadership		4	9	28 Nov 2015, 03:47:28	GEI
Leading by example		1	2	28 Nov 2015, 00:52:56	GEI
Treating people equally		1	2	28 Nov 2015, 00:53:26	GEI
Navigating Positions-performing		1	1	04 Dec 2015, 15:03:24	GEI
Performing		1	1	04 Dec 2015, 15:04:17	GEI
Pushing transformation		8	16	28 Nov 2015, 00:59:02	GEI
Taking action		2	7	27 Nov 2015, 12:29:23	GEI
Reproducing structures or discourses		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 15:36:26	GEI
Seeing-Coming to consciousness	Yes	14	79	26 Nov 2015, 16:34:04	GEI

Acknowledging previledge		9	15	28 Nov 2015, 03:25:44	GEI
Being Answeable to oneself		1	2	05 Dec 2015, 18:36:07	GEI
Being Involved		5	9	01 Dec 2015, 17:45:59	GEI
Deep social commitments		1	2	17 Dec 2015, 17:10:01	GEI
Excellence		1	1	26 Nov 2015, 18:09:48	GEI
Discovering subconscious discourses		5	6	29 Nov 2015, 15:19:00	GEI
Empathising		11	19	01 Dec 2015, 13:28:21	GEI
Unfairness		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:02:33	GEI
Ethical development		2	3	28 Nov 2015, 14:06:03	GEI
Exposing oneself		4	6	28 Nov 2015, 00:49:17	GEI

Getting others to see		2	3	08 Dec 2015, 10:43:30	GEI
Having a different perspective		2	2	28 Nov 2015, 14:03:35	GEI
Having insight		1	1	17 Dec 2015, 15:03:40	GEI
Having moral authority		1	2	11 Dec 2015, 15:46:32	GEI
Having Responsibility		3	5	27 Nov 2015, 15:58:40	GEI
Learning		8	15	28 Nov 2015, 01:04:09	GEI
Not having a clue		1	1	19 Dec 2015, 13:44:06	GEI
Not knowing what to do		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 02:39:13	GEI
Race as limiting		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 23:26:13	GEI
Refusing power		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 14:56:03	GEI

Sense of social justice		3	3	28 Nov 2015, 14:07:51	GEI
Understanding diversity		5	5	28 Nov 2015, 00:50:08	GEI
Seizing opportunities	Yes	7	8	28 Nov 2015, 00:51:19	GEI
Starting something meaningful		1	1	29 Nov 2015, 20:19:59	GEI
Shifting		4	6	28 Nov 2015, 02:09:54	GEI
Stepping off my golden ladder		1	1	06 Dec 2015, 09:14:01	GEI
Surrounding onself with likeminded individuals		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:16:24	GEI
Taking risks		1	1	01 Dec 2015, 17:48:31	GEI
Taking small steps		1	1	06 Dec 2015, 17:11:37	GEI
Talking		1	2	05 Dec 2015, 16:33:16	GEI

Undermining ones agency		1	1	10 Dec 2015, 16:18:25	GEI
Using structures		8	12	27 Nov 2015, 23:51:50	GEI
Getting support from the committee		7	11	26 Nov 2015, 16:26:02	GEI
Rising up the academic hierarchy		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:30:47	GEI
Using the gender structure to be able to speak		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:35:12	GEI
Validating		1	1	02 Dec 2015, 11:37:23	GEI
Working hard		2	2	28 Nov 2015, 00:44:08	GEI
Working with the community		3	4	06 Dec 2015, 15:11:28	GEI
Reflexivity		5	9	28 Nov 2015, 02:28:53	GEI
Reflecting on why she was successful		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 02:01:19	GEI

Role and power		9	12	28 Nov 2015, 03:27:36	GEI
Position as enabling		1	1	28 Nov 2015, 03:49:24	GEI
Status helped a lot		1	2	30 Nov 2015, 12:20:59	GEI
The structural situation		5	13	10 Dec 2015, 16:35:46	GEI
Attitudes		1	5	26 Nov 2015, 17:50:56	GEI
Being goal oriented		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 11:07:25	GEI
Being open		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 12:41:44	GEI
Confidence		1	2	27 Nov 2015, 16:05:38	GEI
Leading by example		1	2	27 Nov 2015, 11:32:19	GEI
Persuasion		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 15:56:07	GEI

Seizing opportunities		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 11:10:10	GEI
Treating People equally		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 15:29:19	GEI
Beliefs		2	7	26 Nov 2015, 17:51:13	GEI
Belief in qualification		1	2	28 Nov 2015, 01:45:35	GEI
Promoting change		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 13:54:13	GEI
Values		2	6	26 Nov 2015, 17:50:49	GEI
Developing good relationships		1	1	27 Nov 2015, 15:30:55	GEI
Doing the right thing		2	2	27 Nov 2015, 13:54:37	GEI