THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF BEING PRIVILEGED AS A WHITE ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUNG ADULT IN POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Although transformation processes are making progress in addressing racial inequality in post-apartheid South Africa, white South Africans are, in many respects, still privileged, economically, in terms of access to services, land, education and particularly in the case of English-speaking whites, language. This study is an exploration of everyday situations of inequality as they have been experienced from a position of advantage. As a qualitative, phenomenological study, the aim was to derive the psychological essence of the experience of being privileged as white English-speaking young adult within the context of post-apartheid South African everyday life. The experiences of privilege which have been described have included a description of how transformation, as a challenge to white privilege, has been experienced. Particularly relevant to this study was the experience of desegregation as this form of social transformation challenges white South Africans' privileged sense of spatial entitlement. Sampling was purposive and eight white English-speaking students from the University of the Western Cape, between the ages of 18 and 26 years, were asked during in-depth interviews to describe scenarios and encounters from everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa in which they had experienced being privileged. Findings concur with recent research on inter-racial contact that within historically whites-only spaces, white South Africans experience desegregation as an unseating of a position and as a loss of a familiar way of being within that space (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004). Research on the racial desegregation of historically black and coloured spaces is limited and this study contributes to understanding how desegregation has been experienced in a historically coloured university campus by white English speaking-young adults. It is argued that this kind of desegregated space offers transformative opportunities for young South Africans of different races to find new ways of relating to one another. Particularly for the white English-speaking students interviewed, it is an academic space in which a privileged position has been perceived in ways which are challenging. This study thus makes a contribution, within the social psychology of race relations, to understanding everyday lived situations of inequality and describes how some of the dilemmas of this inequality are experienced.

DECLARATION

I declare that *The lived experience of being privileged as a white English speaking young adult in post-apartheid South Africa: A phenomenological study* is my own work, that it has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Ross Brian Truscott   November 12 2007

Signed: ……………………..

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To all South Africans who love and want to live in this country

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conceptualization of the study

Implicit from the outset of this study is the notion that, as Frankenberg (1997) has explained, 'race', as a socially constructed racial category, was born out of and is subsumed under broader and older western hierarchical systems. Babb (1998), for example, has described the evolution of racial categories in the Americas where early European settlers initially discriminated between "Christians and heathens", which, over time, changed to a "civilized/savage" distinction and, "subsequently to a white/ non-white distinction" (p. 21). In this sense, "race and racism are fundamentally interwoven" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 9). Following Frankenberg (1997), this study thus takes as its starting point the idea that 'whiteness', as a site of identity formation and as a social construction, is inextricably bound up with a position of privilege.

Concern has recently been raised by Marx and Feltham-King (2006) over the imposition and presupposition of racial categories in social psychology research. While acknowledging the "tenacious reality" (p. 455) of 'race', they are critical of the way in which the concept of 'race' has been used in an unproblematic way, which, they have argued, alludes to a "biological validity of the concept of race" (p. 455).

Dixon and Tredoux (2006) have provided co-ordinates through several important points made about studying 'race' in South Africa. They have argued that classification of human beings into racial categories "…allows researchers to bring into view, for example, forms of geopolitical organization and exclusion that would otherwise remain hidden (even if, by so doing, they must use reifications such as 'white' and 'black')" (p. 461). Research which imposes racial categories, Dixon and Tredoux have argued, is "…forced to abide by some tensions and compromises… precisely to redress the violence brought about by that imposition" (p. 461).

Within this study race has certainly not been defined along biological lines; being 'white' has referred to the experience of being classified a 'white' person and to an identification with that 'racial' category. 'White' therefore, has been defined, in line with most contemporary research on race, as a social construct, albeit a social

construct which has a 'lived reality'. This study, in this sense, is an exploration of the experience of being privileged by virtue of a socially constructed racial category.

1.2 A phenomenological conceptualization of privilege

The Collins Concise Dictionary defines privilege as follows: "**Privilege** *n* **1** a benefit, immunity, etc., granted under certain conditions. **2** the advantages, special rights and immunities enjoyed by a small usually powerful group or class, esp. to the disadvantage of others: *one of the obstacles to social harmony is privilege*" (2004, p. 1193).

When the phenomenon of privilege has been referred to, the 'advantage' implied is only partly an economic advantage, which in the context of South Africa has, pre-1994, been determined by race and still is, to a large degree, influenced by race**.** However, 'privilege' has referred to a phenomenon more broad and deep than economic advantage alone, though certainly encompassing it. Irrespective of social class, the possession of a white skin, in a South African context (and internationally), has allowed, at the level of lived experience, 'special rights and immunities'. This is particularly true for English-speaking whites, as Painter (2005) has noted regarding the privileged position of the English language in multi-lingual South Africa. "Who", he has posed, "would have to be 'brought up to speed', as the patronizing liberal adage around affirmative action so often goes, if isiXhosa and isiZulu had to be incorporated alongside English, as academic languages at traditionally English universities?" (p. 78)

Conceptually then, within this study, privilege has referred to a position of special advantage, including, but also beyond economic and material privilege; this included the racialization of certain spaces as 'white/privileged space' (Durheim, 2005; Robus & Macleod, 2006) and the cultural and linguistic norms to which all people, black and white, are subjected, which to (English-speaking) whites, function as 'special rights and immunities'. It is to these areas of everyday life which this study has directed attention and by so doing, has honed in on privilege experienced in racialized and cultural forms; it is back to these forms of privilege to which all experience of the phenomenon of privilege, in general, have been referred and related in order to derive

the psychological structures of the phenomenon of privilege as it has been experienced by white English-speaking young adults in a post-apartheid context.

1.3 Background to the study

The 1948 elections in South Africa were won, marginally, by the National Party under the slogan 'apartheid', literally meaning 'separateness'. Through the apartheid system and it numerous Acts, the Nationalist white government set about achieving two main aims: the continuation of Nationalist rule in South Africa and the recognition and separation of different groups of South Africans. The agenda of the latter was executed through the assignment of South Africans to racial categories through the Population Registration Act of 1950 and the separation of those groups through the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Mixed Marriages Act of 1950 and the Immorality Act of 1949 (Ross, 1999).

The Acts of apartheid show, in crude form, the social construction of racial categories and the effects this has had on the everyday lives of South Africans. The Acts of apartheid also demonstrate how these groupings came to be understood as real, legitimate, lawful, fixed categories. Elaboration on the social construction of racial categories and on the imposition and misuse of these categories under the apartheid government hardly seems necessary, except to say that life and its possibilities were defined in South Africa by the racial category into which a person was placed, privileging whites and marginalizing and oppressing those who were not white.

In 1994, 19 726 610 South Africans voted in the founding election of the new South Africa (Ross, 1999), providing the landmark for becoming a free, democratic and united country. After the abolition of the oppressive apartheid government, South Africa was, as the banner under which the African National Congress campaigned, 'one nation, many cultures' and the future of South Africa was grounded on negotiated agreements regarding political, economic and social transformation.

It is fair to say that political transformation, in terms of equal voting rights and a constitution which enshrines equality for all South African citizens, has been brought about, while economic and social transformation, despite negligible gains, has not.

While government policy aimed at "dismantling white privilege" (Durrheim, 2003, p. 242) is facilitating a shift in the economic landscape, 13 years after the first democratic election vast economic discrepancies between white and black remain (Oosthuizen, 2006).

The experience of transformation has been given a prominent place in this study because transformation processes are a direct challenge to the privilege white South Africans have historically experienced and continue to experience in post-apartheid South Africa, at least economically and, in many respects, socially. In this sense, the 'general climate of transformation' in South Africa is the broad political, economic and social context within which meaning has been created about the experience of the phenomenon of privilege and, as such, a position of relative advantage in a country moving towards equality, has been experienced and understood.

Desegregation, as a transformational process, poses serious challenges to the privileged access to space whites have historically experienced. A recent development in the social psychology of race relations has been the focus of scholarly attention on the experience of desegregated everyday spaces in post-apartheid South Africa. Borrowing from approaches to studying segregation on a macro level, these studies have drawn attention to the transformation and desegregation of spaces in post-apartheid South Africa, though focussing on what has been called the 'micro-ecology of racial division' (Dixon, Tredoux & Clack 2005), or the 'micro-ecology of racial contact' (Foster, 2005).

Sociologists and urban geographers have provided significant findings on segregation at a macro level, the broad strokes of which have been that "…segregation sustains ethnic and racial discrimination, shaping the distribution of wealth and poverty, services and resources and even health and mortality" (Dixon, et al., 2005, p. 3). It is not surprising then, that there has been a great deal of energy devoted to the study of micro level segregation and desegregation processes and that much is being learned from psychological studies "…exploring the patterns of racial contact and isolation in post-apartheid South Africa" (Dixon, et al., 2005, p. 397).

These studies have taken the desegregated spaces of everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa as the settings for research, examining racialized forms of contact and isolation, for example, on the Jameson steps at the University of Cape Town (UCT) (Tredoux, Dixon, Underwood, Nunez & Finchilescu, 2005), student residence dining halls on the campus of UCT (Schrief, Tredoux, Dixon & Finchilescu, 2005), the highly publicized Imizamo Yethu informal settlement in Hout Bay, Cape Town (Dixon & Reicher, 1997), and public beaches (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004). These everyday spaces, it will be noticed, are all of a particular kind: spaces which were reserved exclusively for whites under apartheid (Marx & Feltham-King, 2006).

Durrheim (2005) has concluded that "…psychological transformation is predicated upon the transformation of the spatial practices, and ultimately of the spaces of privilege and disadvantage that continue to characterize the landscape of the new South Africa" (p. 457). A fundamental aspect of the approach to 'psychological transformation' which Durrheim (2005) has advocated is not only the desegregation of historically 'white' spaces, but also the transformation of apartheid "…spaces of (racial) degradation" (p. 457) into more desirable places to be, "…thereby forcing new, reverse, patterns of racial movement" (p. 457). In a lived sense, this means that white South Africans are not only to transform their 'spatial practices' within historically 'white/privileged' space, but that those spaces are to be moved from and the transformation of apartheid 'spaces of degradation' participated in.

It has been within a country structured under apartheid "…spatial engineering" (Foster, 2005, p. 495), spatially configured to marginalize 'non-white'[1] South Africans and privilege white South Africans, that white English-speaking young adults have grown up and from which they have moved into a post-apartheid South Africa, into the era of 'post-apartheid', and into the spaces of a transforming country. By attending the University of the Western Cape (UWC), co-researchers have, arguably, initiated a 'new kind of racial movement' into a historically coloured university, 'a new space of desire', yet into this new era and into the everyday

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[1] The term 'non-white' has been used here, and elsewhere in this study, only in order to emphasise the way in which 'whiteness' sets 'white' up as a point of reference; as centred (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Morrison, 1992).

contexts of a transforming country these white English-speaking young adults move with "…inherited and socialised models of subjectivity" (van Wyk, pp. 92-93). What has been 'inherited', and thus what is carried into a new era, is a socio-spatial logic of "apart-heid" (Hook, 2004; Ratele, 2005, p. 567); domestic life, in particular, taught white South Africans their "…proper place in the home" (Dixon, et al., 2005, p. 396). It is with this 'inheritance', this sense of privilege, reinforced by cityscapes of white centres and a black peripheries (van Ommen & Painter, 2005), that young whites negotiate a place in post-apartheid South Africa.

Very little is known about how 'being privileged', in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, has been perceived, how it has been given meaning and experienced in the everyday spaces of everyday life. Equally little is known of the way in which privilege and, as such inequality, has been given meaning as a transforming phenomenon; in other words, it's perceived trajectory. The context of this study provided an opportunity to explore how having grown up with a sense of being privileged, in relation to other South Africans and in terms of a position within the country, has been perceived in post-apartheid South Africa, particularly in the space of a racially integrated, historically coloured university and under the light of post-apartheid.

Through a phenomenological approach, this study responds to some of the theoretical and methodological developments in the social psychology of race relations. Durrheim and Dixon (2005), whose approach has frequently entailed observational methodology well as an analysis of discourse, have proposed "…an approach to studying racial phenomena that foregrounds the embodied and located nature of racial practices" (pp. 446-447); an approach to studying racial phenomena in social psychology, Durrheim and Dixon (2005) have argued, "…that understands the articulation of two related domains of practices –embodied spatio-temporal practices and linguistic practices (talk)- that together constitute the reality of 'race relations' in specific, concrete contexts" (p. 446).

As this study has taken a phenomenological approach, focusing on 'meaning' and perceptions of 'being-in-the-world' (Giorgi, 1994), it is argued that this approach has something to add to the social psychology of race relations—something of the

'embodied and located nature of racial practices'—through a phenomenological formulation of *lived*, or *experienced* space. Phenomenology too, offers an approach which allows a return to the body, not in a positivist sense, but from a phenomenological theoretical approach to the body as it is subjectively experienced within space, time and, as privilege is necessarily relative, in relation to others with whom everyday spaces are experienced.

1.4 Rationale for the study

The rationale for this study lies in the necessity of providing appropriate description of the 'New South Africa'. Before the rainbow nation metaphor can be fully embraced, "South Africa needs to examine the cultural baggage, including attitudes, identities, economic disparity, differing access to structures and languages of power it is carrying" (Distiller & Steyn, 2004, p. 2). A phenomenological study of the experience of white privilege enables a description of some of what has been brought into post-apartheid everyday experience by young English-speaking whites.

This study has focused on English-speaking whites in particular, which may require justification. Firstly, the researcher is English-speaking and for practical communicative reasons it is easier to interview co-researchers of one's own language, but also, as Salusbury (2003) has pointed out, white English-speaking South Africans have not been the focus of much academic interest as a distinct social category in South Africa. Although the distinction may be blurry between English and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans, examples of the signifiers of a cultural divide noted by Salusbury (2003) such as the 'boerewors curtain' in Cape Town, are grounds for considering white English-speaking South Africans as a distinct social group.

Apart from cultural differences between white English and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, it is also important to pay attention to the English language itself, which has, despite official acknowledgement of eleven languages, been embraced as "a symbol of national unity, civic, (as opposed to ethnic) identity and a vehicle of modernization and economic mobility" (Painter, 2005, p. 77). Wicombe (2001) has suggested that while Afrikaans has become a disgraced and visible category, the English language, through its assumption of national language status, is where whiteness "will continue to reside in silence and anonymity" (p. 180). While seeming inclusive and accessible

to all, the position of the English language creates barriers for many South Africans to capitalize on their first language linguistic resources. The positioning of the English language can be understood as being related to 'racism' as the 'special rights and immunities' of this positioning have marginalizing effects on those who are not English-speaking.

The target population of this study, in terms of age, is *young adult* white South Africans between 18 and 26 years. Dolby (2000) has stated that these South Africans are "…a generation whose past, present and future are neither completely defined by apartheid, nor completely free of it" (p. 9). In the context of this study, therefore, *young adult* has been defined not only as an age range, but also by the experience of having been a child during the apartheid years and having been between the ages of six and 14 when South Africa became a democracy; it is defined as having grown up both during the end of apartheid and during the beginning of post-apartheid South Africa. On embarking on this study it was hoped that findings would not only reveal the legacy of apartheid, but also new ways of 'being' with each other in the spaces of everyday life and some of the ways in which inequality had been approached, apprehended and overcome in the lives of young South Africans.

Smith and Stones (1999) have suggested that in young people, for whom political involvement is unlikely, attitudes towards social interaction may be a useful area of exploration in predicting future racial attitudes towards broader social issues such as equality. This notion certainly encourages taking seriously how 'micro-ecological processes' within friendships are organized in the perceptions of young white English-speaking South Africans and how space within friendships is regulated and shared.

The rationale for the study was also a distinct gap in post-apartheid South African literature in terms of descriptions of lived experiences where resolutions had been found and meaning created out of the everyday situations of unequal South African life; descriptions of 'new ways of being', new forms of relatedness (Ratele, 2005) and "…revised relations of alterity between white and black in South Africa" (Wicombe, 2001, p. 170). Existing descriptions of the lived experience of being white have come predominantly from Afrikaners. It was hoped that a description of a narrow, but

problematic aspect of the experience of this generation living in post-apartheid South Africa might contribute to filling in that gap.

1.5 Aim of this study

The aim of this study was to elicit descriptions of the phenomenon of privilege as it has been experienced by co-researchers in everyday, post-apartheid South African life, in everyday spaces and in relation to other people with whom those spaces are inhabited. By so doing, it was aimed to come to an understanding of the meaning which has been given to the experience of the privilege.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Philosophical underpinnings: Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl is recognized as the founder of the phenomenological method and the person who developed the philosophic system of Phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994), although the term was used as early as 1765 in philosophy (Kockelmans 1967) and later in the writing of Kant, Hegel and Marx (Moustakas, 1994; Spinelli, 1989). The origin of the word 'phenomenon' stated in the Collins Concise dictionary is the Greek word, *phaenesthai,* meaning to "to appear" derived from *phaino*, or *phainomenon*, meaning "to show itself in itself…" (2004, p1126). What is apparent from the etymology of 'phenomenon' and the way in which the word has been appropriated by philosophy and the social sciences, is an ontological preoccupation with understanding the appearance of a 'thing' as it is experienced and the relationship that experience has to 'reality'; to 'the thing itself'. As it relates to this study, it is the *appearance* of privilege to co-researchers which is focussed upon; how privilege has shown itself, as a phenomenon, to co-researchers' through their perceptions.

Husserl's notion of intentionality implies that subject and object do not exist independently, rather, "…the very meaning of subject implies a relationship to an object, and to be an object intrinsically implies being related to subjectivity" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 338). Consciousness, in this sense, is necessarily relational. Phenomenology is thus not concerned with objective reality, but rather with how objects are present to a person and how meaning is given to that which appears to a person. This also implies a negation of the passive perception of objects. Rather, human consciousness actively constitutes objects of experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Consciousness, from a phenomenological perspective, is a person's "medium of access to whatever is given to awareness" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 236) and it is consciousness which contributes to the meaning given to objects by a person to whom the objects are present.

Consciousness thus refers to a person's directedness of attention towards the objects within their "embodied-self-world-others" system (Giorgi, 1997, p. 338). Stemming from this conceptualization of consciousness, a more refined definition of the term 'phenomenon' is that which, within a person's 'embodied-self-world-others system',

appears to a person, precisely as it appears (Giorgi, 1997). Phenomena are thus not 'real' in an objective sense, they are subjectively experienced through the directedness of consciousness to aspects of one's life-world, thus also implying that phenomena are partial views of the objects within this system (Giorgi, 1997), about which meaning is created.

While phenomenology takes 'consciousness' as its focus, it does not preclude the unconscious in its conceptualization of experience. As Hopkins (1997) has argued, phenomenological experience "does not uncover an unconscious entity in itself that somehow stands opposed to consciousness" (p. 145), rather, "...it discovers a domain of contents, manifest to an attentive ego-consciousness, that is structured by the reference to a genesis beyond such attentive ego-consciousness" (p. 145). Phenomenology and the unconscious, then, are not incompatible. However, consideration of unconscious factors, from a phenomenological approach, would not constitute interpretation of that which is out of awareness, i.e. 'that which transcends the given', rather, the focus is on an emerging awareness of a phenomenon to an individual; emerging in the sense that aspects of the phenomenon emerge from previous unawareness, in reflection.
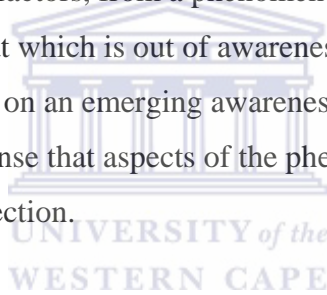
Implicit in Husserl's view of consciousness and intentionality are the concepts of texture and structure of experience and their phenomenological noematic and noetic correlates. A textural description of a phenomenon includes the many different ways in which an object appears to a person, from different angles, at different times and in different phases of perception, under varying conditions (Moustakis, 1994). Phenomenological research has as its aim the description of the "essential, invariant structure of an experience" (Creswell, 1998, p. 52), in other words, the underlying meaning of an experience. Structures of experience underlie textures of experience and are uncovered through acts of reflection (Moustakis, 1994). Texture is given order by the structure of an experience, or, stated differently, texture is the 'what' of experience, while structure is 'how' the 'what' is experienced, thus texture and structure are in continual relationship (Moustakis, 1994).

Texture, in the intentional act, correlates with the noema of a phenomenon, it is 'what' is before a person in consciousness as they perceive, remember or imagine the

thing (Moustakis, 1994) and, therefore, is not the thing itself, but the perception, remembrance or imagination of the thing from the various vantage points of everyday experience as it appears to a person. The structure of experience correlates with the noesis of a phenomenon and reveals itself to a person through reflection on how noematic aspects of a phenomenon have come to be experienced as they have.

To apply these concepts to this study and, in so doing, clarify the approach taken, it was to the experience of privilege which co-researchers were asked to direct their attention. Co-researchers were asked to describe everyday situations within their life-worlds in which the phenomenon of privilege had been present to them in its spatial and temporal appearances. Textural-structural descriptions for each co-researcher as well as a composite textural-structural description expresses, not an objective reality, but the subjective experience of their life-world and the meaning given to appearances of the phenomenon to them and, in so doing, describes the essence of the experience of privilege within a circumscribed context.

Space, from a phenomenological perspective, is not viewed in its measurable and objective properties, but rather, as it is perceived subjectively, giving primacy to the meaning given to the experience of space (Benswanger, 1979). In his study of the phenomenology of lived-space in early childhood, Benswanger (1979) derived the structures of the experience of space through the frame of "self-act-world" (p. 121), in other words, by exploring how a person had embodied the space of their everyday life, not only having perceived space, but having acted within it, and having related to the objects within that space. Drawing on Heidegger, Benswanger (1979) noted that in a phenomenological formulation of space, it is the appearance of the world as a place in which one can live which is focused upon. This leads the phenomenological researcher to explore the arrangement of a person's life-world into a meaningful and coherent order, showing the researcher how a person expresses "his humanness through the spatial dimension" (Benswanger, 1979, p. 113). "Spatiality" (Benswanger, 1979, p. 112), as it is approached from a phenomenological perspective, is a description of how space is lived by a person.

'Bodiliness' (Kruger, 1979), or the place of the body in the formulation of 'lived experience', is approached phenomenologically in much the same way as 'spatiality'

is approached. The body is taken as a part of consciousness in relation to the external world of objects, a sensing "bodily I" (Linschoten, 1979, p. 58), expressive of the thinking self and functioning as an apparatus of consciousness and a means of access to the world of objects, *and* is taken as a part of the external world of objects, which exist in time and space, which is intuited and about which meaning is created. With this formulation of subjectivity primacy is given to the mind and temporality, though it does incorporate the body, through which a person lives and experiences, into its conception of subjectivity.

A phenomenological view of 'lived-space' has much to offer a social psychological exploration of the experience of privilege and, as such, inequality, desegregation and segregation, particularly if the "spatial logic of apartheid" (Hook, 2004, p. 689) which has organized the lives of South Africans is considered. At a domestic level, the reproduction of this 'logic' through suburban households during apartheid having had maid's quarters separate from the main house serves as commonplace example of how this 'spatial logic' has permeated the everyday experience of South Africans (Dixon, et al., 2005). Macro-level examples of the contribution of architecture and town planning towards inequality and segregation hardly need to be mentioned.

Benswanger's (1979) notion that "(t)he nuances and atmosphere of one's home provide a kind of prototype for all other home spaces" (p. 114) offers useful coordinates for a phenomenological exploration of the experience of the phenomenon of privilege. It is within the spatial organization of suburban homes that white South African young adults have grown up and from which they move out into the everyday spaces of their home country: school, university, the workplace, bars, churches, beaches, shopping centres, cafeterias.

The choice of phenomenology in this study takes guidance from the ongoing debate about the relevance and usefulness of different approaches utilized by social psychologists in South Africa (Durheim, 2001; Durheim & Dixon, 2005; Hook, 2004; Painter, 2005; Painter and Theron, 2001a; Painter and Theron, 2001b). Hook (2004) has argued that racism "…is a set of phenomena that is as *psychical* as it is political in nature, *affective* as it is discursive, *subjective* as it is ideological" (p. 676, italics author's). The approach adopted in this study is able to appreciate the 'psychical',

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'affective' and 'subjective' features of racism which relate to inequality through a phenomenological formulation of 'experience' which encompasses the concepts of consciousness, intentionality, spaciality, bodiliness, texture and structure, and inter-subjective meaning.

2.2 Review of the Literature

2.2.1 Introduction

The review of the literature has been organised into the following sections: Firstly, as privilege has been a topic given much attention in writing and research, particularly within social constructionist analyses of 'whiteness', a brief review of some of the land mark texts has been provided. An exploration of the lived experience of *being* privileged is usefully related to studies of whiteness because, as Frankenberg (1997) has argued, whiteness, as a set of discourses and practices, and as a site of identity formation, is "inseparable from racial domination" (p. 9). Following this, privilege, as a phenomenon, has been situated within a post-apartheid South African context which, in several respects, differs from the international contexts from which writings on white privilege have emerged.

The particular group from which co-researchers come, namely 'white English-speaking young adult South Africans', is described, elaborating on the previous chapter's delimitation of the particular historical and socio-political context in which the phenomenon of privilege, as a psychological experience, has been explored. As the project of white domination has been bound up with space, its occupation and its organization, relevant recent research on the desegregation of various spaces in post-apartheid South Africa have thus been presented and discussed.

As has been noted in the introduction, race and racism are inseparable phenomena. In this sense, racism is closely linked to the phenomenon of privilege through the way in which racial categories have historically created social systems of differentiation and hierarchy. For this reason an overview of relevant writing and research on racism, as it relates to the experience of being privileged, is the penultimate sub-section in the review of literature. This is followed by an outline of writing and research on the politics of the body and its relationship to the creation and reproduction of privileged space.

2.2.2 White privilege

Roediger (1991) has argued in *The Wages of Whiteness*, that whiteness itself is inseparable from the history of capitalism and colonialism. Despite colonies becoming independent, whites have continued to exert economic dominance in those colonies and culturally maintain strong global influence. This is certainly the case in South Africa where apartheid no longer exists, nor its predecessor, the colonial state, yet whites maintain colonial racial assumptions of superiority and of entitlement to land ownership and privileged professional positions (Steyn, 2001).

What is most salient in the literature is the lack of understanding that white people have of how their racial advantage is constructed in everyday life (Dyer 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Nakayama and Krizek, 1999). The everyday and commonplace experience of privilege is not critically considered or seen to require explanation, to the point, in some contexts, of being invisible (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993, 1997). It has been proposed that it is whites' lack of cultural membership which strengthens an existing ideology of individualism, and that it is through this sense of individuality that an awareness and articulation of what it is to be white is resisted, including what it is to be privileged as white, thus perpetuating racial inequality (Mahoney, 1997).

In order to avoid the difficulty of acknowledging and feeling the extent to which white talk aims to deny a racialized position, Frankenberg (1993) has put forward the notion that, contained in white discourse are pervasive elements of a "flight from feeling" (p. 156). Race difference is denied "despite its continued salience in society and in (one's) own life" and in the difference between racial groups which is allowed into consciousness, a distinction is made in the "discursive terrain" between safe and dangerous differences (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 156). By so doing, there is often

> …a selective attention to difference, allowing into conscious scrutiny, even conscious embrace, those differences that make the speaker feel good but continue to evade by means of partial description, euphemism and self contradiction those that make the speaker feel bad, such as the naming of inequality, power imbalance, hatred or fear. (Frankenberg, 1993, pp. 156-157)

Harris (1993), in an article entitled *Whiteness as Property*, has suggested that whiteness, as legal and cultural property, provides material and symbolic privilege to

whites. However, it is not only the privileged ownership of 'whiteness', Harris has argued, but also black bodies and black labour which, through enslavement, have been reduced to forms of white property. Similarly, Sexton (2003) has proposed that "…the material and symbolic elaboration of whiteness as a cultural formation… and a historic bloc is grounded in the domination of black people, rooted in the maintenance of black people in subordinate, degraded positions—socially marginalized, but symbolically central" (p. 245). As Sexton has argued, "There is… no concept of whiteness which is calm, present and self-referential; there are no positive qualities to whiteness, only differences between whiteness and its racialized others (particularly, though not exclusively, blackness)" (p. 245).

This point is poignantly illustrated by Wellman (1997) who has used Minstrelsy as a metaphor for understanding anti affirmative action talk. Minstrel shows, he has argued, were not about the black American "objects of ridicule onstage" (p. 312), they were about white Americans; white Americans were the "unannounced objects of attention" (p. 312) in Minstrel shows. The shows "…soothed white anxieties, they reassured white men who they were not: not black, not slave, not gay" (p. 312). Wellman has argued that anti-affirmative action talk, as a symbolic act, is likewise concerned with "marking racial otherness" (p. 326); defining what white American males are not: weak and in need of 'unfair' advantage. It is the positioning of whiteness as the "unmarked marker" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 9) on which the privileges of being a white person are predicated. Though as Frankenberg (1997) has explained, that 'unmarked-ness' and the power which it generates is frequently unstable, "multifaceted, rather than monolithic" (p. 21).

In describing the invisibility of whiteness in her book entitled *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*, Toni Morrison (1992) has suggested that it is perpetuated because whiteness supplies the very context for meaning making and that it supplies the norms and categories against which all groups are measured. Another example of writing in this line is Richard Dyer's *White* (1997) which examines images from mainstream western culture to illustrate how the white body is formulated as the point of reference for aestheticism and beauty. In response to this, particularly once writings and research on race began focusing on whiteness as a social construction, the primary concern of writers has been to make whiteness

visible, and in so doing, dislodge it from a position of central power (Dyer, 1997), or, to expose "…whiteness masquerading as universal" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 3). In this way, writing on whiteness has been an anti-racist exercise which has striven to cast light on the normalization of whiteness and whiteness as an invisible site from which dominance is asserted and privilege experienced without question.

Frankenberg (1997) has used social and cultural images to illustrate a "trope-ical family" (p. 12), in which the figures, "White Woman, White Man, Man of Colour, Woman of Colour" (p. 11), are configured in relation to one another, creating an interweaving of race and gender. As Frankenberg has argued, 'White Man' must protect a "frail, vulnerable, delicate, sexually pure" (p. 11) 'White Woman' from a predatory and "sexually rapacious" (p. 12) 'Man of Colour'. 'Woman of Colour' is, in Frankenberg's proposed scheme, "construed ambivalently, always on a slippery slope from exotic beauty, to unfemininity and ugliness" (p. 12). It is in this configuration of relationships, Frankenberg (1997) has argued, that 'White Man's' sense of worth as saviour lies. He is, in this strictly heterosexual and mono-racial arrangement, privileged as the protector, whereas, 'Man of Colour' is the dangerous criminal and sexual deviant.
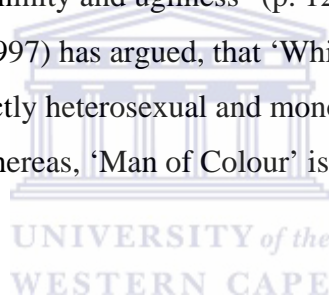
It is into this construction of tropic representations, Frankenberg (1997) has proposed, that real white and black people are drawn, enacting and performing aspects of the arrangement. Particularly relevant to this study is the conditional, "ambiguous and ambivalent status in the family of tropes" (Frankenberg, 1997, p. 12) 'White Woman' occupies. 'White Woman's' race/gender positioning privileges her, but simultaneously binds her to contractual conditions: that she remain chastised and in need of 'White Man's' protection and, therefore, simultaneously in a subordinate position.

2.2.3 White South African privilege

What makes 'whiteness', and as such the privilege which white people experience, different in South Africa, when compared to much of the research already done internationally which depicts the normativity and invisibility of whiteness, as described above, is that in South Africa whiteness has been "…more obvious in its potency: self conscious rather than deliberately obscured, and accepted, rather than

veiled as a site of privilege" (Steyn, 2001, p. 93), or, as Ndebele (1991, p. 38) has put it: "…the most outstanding feature of South African oppression is its brazen exhibitionist openness", relating to the way in which South African whites have exerted power from a minority position. In South Africa, although whiteness has not been, as in America, an invisible site of privilege, it has been the right to privilege and the justification of privilege, which has been veiled and has been invisible to whites (Steyn, 2001).

Despite the difference in context, Sexton's (2003) words quoted earlier—'socially marginalized, but symbolically central'—are equally relevant to a post-apartheid South African context. Black South Africans, generally, live in the social margins, in townships, but, as is the case in the American context to which Sexton referred (2003), blacks are 'symbolically central', at least to whites, making up the social boundaries at which whites define who they are not: a domestic worker, a gardener, an informal settler, a 'token appointment' in need of affirmative action (Wellman, 1997).

Social psychology research on desegregation briefly described in the introduction, although not concentrating on the experience of privilege, supports this notion, which also relates to what Hook (2004), drawing on the feminist writings of Butler (1993), has described as "…the spatial logic of apartheid" (p. 689) which designated who may inhabit what space, or, as posited by (Ndebele, 1991, p. 37), the "…luxurious lifestyle of whites: servants, all encompassing privilege, swimming pools and high commodity consumption" which becomes obscenely obvious when examined against the backdrop of "…the sprawling monotony of architecture in African locations".

Although it is a somewhat dated text, Cock's (2001) book based on a study she conducted in 1980 titled *Maids and Madams: A study in the Politics of Exploitation* adds to the context of this study; it is a depiction of the typical home environment during apartheid South Africa, around the time most co-researchers were born. Here Benswangers (1979) phenomenological notion of the importance of the 'prototypical home', which structures perceptions of broader 'home spaces', makes Cock's (2001) research relevant to this study. Cock explored the relationship between domestic workers and their employers, all white English-speaking women. Domestic service,

Cock asserts, is "…the crudest, and most hidden, expression of inequality in this society" (P. 1).

Several findings from Cock's research are relevant to this study. Firstly, Frankenberg's (1997) description of the 'conditional privilege' experienced by white women through an 'ambiguous race/gender positioning' in society is strikingly apparent. The inequality in the relationship between employer and domestic worker is structured around stock racial stereotypes, including perceptions of black domestic workers being lazy, deceitful and lacking intelligence. However, in a sense, both 'maid' and 'madam' are domestic servants and while the white English-speaking female employer is certainly privileged, it is domestic workers who, in general, do not accept the legitimacy of their subordination, while the 'madams' wall themselves up against the threat of the 'Bantu problem', in need of protection from their husbands (Cock, 2001). In concluding her study, Cock warned of the consequences of this exploitive relationship to South African whites: a moral debt and a loss of one's humanity.

More recently, and in an innovative study conducted by van Ommen and Painter (2005) which analyzed sketch maps of East London produced by university students residing in that town, drawings were taken to "represent characterizations of lived space" that are "ideologically embedded" (p. 505). Maps, in other words, provided the researchers with "a sketch of the sketchers" (p. 527) and were taken as a form of discourse. The authors note that "meanings are not only etched in discourse and drawings, but in the very cityscape". The town itself, with its "racially sculpted landscape" (p. 528), were taken as text, as were its representation in drawings. Of the landscape as "ideologically sculpted" (p. 528), van Ommen and Painter (2005) comment that

> … such a racially sculpted landscape, where the dark serving and subservient other is hidden, allows for the seamless flow to contemporary consumerist culture where the poor (and mostly dark) can remain hidden in industrial areas and distant zones, so as not to spoil the pleasure of the shopping malls so prominent in these sketches. (p. 528)

Space, within apartheid South Africa, as noted in the introduction, was inextricably political and was organized and allocated along racial lines. And space is as fundamental in understanding the everyday lived experience of South Africans as it is in processes aimed at transformation and equality in post-apartheid South Africa.

Collier (2005), in a paper titled *Context, Privilege and Contingent Cultural Identifications in South African Group Interview Discourses*, found in the discourse of group interviewees, "…tensions and conflicting views about their multiple identifications" (p. 312), or as the title of her paper suggests, "contingent cultural identifications", with participants frequently taking an ambivalent stance. Collier has stated: "Views expressed characterize outside forces and 'blacks' as threats which are minimal as well as overwhelming. The threats are described to impact the individuals' abilities in the focus group to be successful" (p. 310), functioning, she explains, to frame a situation which threatens the continued success of white individuals, as reverse discrimination. "Comments thus reflect the importance of 'white' individuals continuing to have the ability to achieve success" (p. 310).

Although local psychological research on the experience of white privilege is short, there are several studies which incorporate an investigation of attitudes towards and experience of, transformation policy. In a study on racial attitudes, Gibson and Macdonald (2000) have described the way in which many whites support racial integration, yet remain opposed to affirmative action. Similarly, in a study conducted by Durrheim (2003) with 134 white university students, it is interesting to note the predictors of opposition to the various categories of legislation. Opposition to affirmative action was predicted by anti-egalitarianism, beliefs about the influence of past discrimination, and 'old fashioned racism' (Sears, 1988), while it was 'old fashioned racism' which was the strongest predictor of opposition to all 3 categories of racial policy.

Research suggests that the role of old fashioned racism produces a clearer picture of opposition to transformation, but the more prevalent sort, symbolic racism, produces, and is configured in, ambivalence. From the abovementioned studies the most apt term to describe attitudes amongst white South Africans towards the challenges posed

to white privilege by competitive policy, if pushed for an encompassing description, is ambivalent, both amongst study results and within them.

Similarly, in an investigation into the portrayal of whiteness by white liberals in autobiographical literature, Nuttall (2000) has suggested that narratives of white South African identity are located within a range of, on the one hand, masking and transfiguration, a self split off from historical South African whiteness (this hints at fluidity in the meaning of 'whiteness' created by whites and to the increasingly pluralized narratives of whiteness which loosen themselves from what Steyn (2001) has called the 'master narrative of whiteness'), while on the other hand, depictions with the aim of making whiteness visible (Nuttall, 2000). Nuttall has argued that what pervades the depictions of whiteness is an evasion of an awareness of the cost of apartheid. Although outright denial is frequent, usually more subtle defenses are employed in maintaining privilege and power in everyday life (Nuttall, 2000).

2.2.4 White English-speaking South Africans

Although the majority of English-speaking whites presently living in South Africa are descendents of assisted immigration programs which were designed to secure British colonized territory (the first group of English-speaking settlers arrived with the British colonization of the Cape in 1806 and later, in greater numbers, with the 1820 settlers who arrived in the Eastern Cape (Paton, 1981)), white English-speaking South Africans are a heterogeneous group who are of mixed ancestry, including Dutch, German, Portuguese, Greek and Jewish descent who make up 40 % of the white South African population (Sparks, 2003).

The term 'White English-speaking South African', then, is rather an arbitrary one, when the heterogeneity of this group is considered. When compared to Afrikaners, white English-speakers tend to have little or no sense of nationalistic group consciousness (Garson, 1976). It has been this a-collectivity which has been the focus of much of the writings about white English-speaking South Africans. Historically, white English-speaking South Africans have retained European and particularly British ties. The language, for example, of English-speaking South Africans has remained very close to the British dialect, while Afrikaners developed a new language, which is of Africa and, of the land (Wicombe, 2001). In post apartheid

South Africa they tend to see themselves as belonging to an international community which it is always possible to rejoin (Sparks, 1990).

White English-speaking South Africans have generally subscribed to a philosophy of individualism, which, it has been suggested, has perpetuated the in-articulation of group characteristics. What white English-speaking South Africans are not, rather than what they are, is, according to Sennet and Foster (1996), a central characteristic of group identity, what has been called an 'anti-ism', referring to being not-Afrikaans/ not-black. A charge may be laid before them of apathy, of politically choosing neither the Afrikaner nationalists nor black nationalists and "withdrawing into commerce to dominate economically a country in which they are politically powerless" (Sparks, 2003, p. 6), without a clear political role or ethnic identity.

This conflict over identity and a role within the new South Africa, coupled with fears over the loss of economic opportunity through affirmative action has lead to the phenomenon of the brain drain. It has, however, been suggested that underlying these concerns is a "subliminal unease… rooted in generations of assumed cultural superiority" (Sparks, 2003, p. 6), in other words, an expectation that South Africa, without their expertise and in the hands of black South Africans, will fail 'as the rest of Africa has'.

2.2.5 Spatial transformation: Social contact and desegregation research
The South African Journal of Psychology (SAJP) recently published a special focus issue on race titled 'Racial contact and isolation in everyday life' (2005). The editors of the issue stated that the intention was to "explore some patterns of contact and isolation, focusing on settings where a degree of desegregation has supposedly occurred" (Dixon & Tredoux, 2006, p. 459). The reason this focus was chosen and why it is important in South Africa is stated by the editors as follows:

> Although it no longer assumes the monolithic formations of apartheid, segregation
> remains present and pervasive in South Africa. It continues to shape the lives of all
> citizens (and many non-citizens). It operates across a range of scales and contexts, and
> remains entrenched within the morphology of urban and rural life. It estranges people

from one another and sustains relations of advantage, exclusion and discrimination.

(Dixon & Tredoux, 2006, p. 462)

The importance of these studies, in what they tell us about racist practices related to the experience of privilege, is that racism is usefully conceptualized as an exclusionary act which has permutations on a macro and a micro level. Durheim and Dixon (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004) have, through their research, drawn attention to the need for social psychology to "take seriously people's lived experience of racism". Such a social psychology of racism, they have argued (as mentioned in the introduction to this study, but bears repetition) "…needs to understand the articulation of two related domains of practices—embodied spatio-temporal practices and linguistic practices (talk)—that together constitute the reality of 'race relations' in specific, concrete contexts" (Durheim & Dixon, 2005, p. 446). An important finding from their observations and an analysis of the discourse of the people on the previously privileged space of public beaches, was that desegregation is spoken about and experienced by whites as an invasion of black people and an "unacceptable process that had seen whites displaced from various places of value" (p. 446), and by black people as whites running away from them, or as "white flight" (p. 445).

Clack, Dixon and Tredoux, (2005) conducted a similar study on segregation as a "micro-ecological process" (p. 1) within the space of a university cafeteria in England. An important finding in their study was that their observations provided support for the notion of "illusory contact" (Taylor, Dubé & Bellrose, 1986, in Clack, et al., 2005, p. 4). In other words, they found that a space which had officially been desegregated and appeared to be so, in reality continued to be segregated. In commenting on this study and other similar pieces of research by psychologists, Dixon and Tredoux (2006) state that "…they have told us something important about the potentially cosmetic nature of desegregation, even within supposedly integrated settings" (p. 460).

This was, and still is, new ground for social psychology as previous research on segregation has been restricted to macro level analysis (Clack, et al., 2005). In commenting on the significance of research from other disciplines such as urban

sociology and geography, i.e. research at a 'macro-spatial level', Clack, et al. (2005) highlight the importance of understanding segregation as a "structural lynchpin of ethnic and racial inequality" (p. 4). Clack, et al. (2005) have argued that because the "micro-ecology of segregation restricts the opportunity for face to face interaction and expresses social distance and division, it has applied implications as significant as segregation at a macro scale" (p. 15). The authors concluded that in order to understand the 'illusory contact' suggested by the data, "the practices through which ethnic boundaries are maintained in everyday life spaces require closer scrutiny" (p. 14).

Particularly relevant to the age group within which co-researchers fall is Holtman, Louw, Tredoux and Carney's (2005) paper titled *Prejudice and social contact in South Africa: A study of integrated schools ten yeas after apartheid*. Not only is this research relevant because of the age of the participants, but, as the title suggests, the spaces investigated are racially desegregated schools in which scholars have had over 10 years of integration. Two important findings which relate to this study emerged. Firstly, social contact was the single most important factor in predicting race attitudes. "It seems to be", the authors stated, "more important than socio-economic class, demographic integration of the school, or participants' race" (Holtman, et al., 2005, p. 490). For English-speaking white learners racial identification "emerged as a consistent predictor of social distance, anti-black sentiment and the endorsement of racial attitudes towards black African and coloured people" (p. 490). Socioeconomic class, for white English-speaking learners, seems to play a very limited role in predicting racial attitudes. This study, a quantitative investigation, provided useful coordinates for exploring the meanings of some of the above mentioned predictors, for instance, in this study, the way in which class is related to social contact, not merely as a predictor, but as a lived experience.

The abovementioned studies have several implications for this study. Firstly, by 'closer scrutiny', it is presumed that Clack, et al. (2005) are referring to qualitative exploration; one criticism of recent 'micro-ecological research' on racial desegregation and segregation has been its predominantly observational methodology (Marx & Feltham-King, 2006). Secondly, a further criticism put forward about these studies has been the exclusive focus on "privileged spaces" (Marx & Feltham-King,

2006, p. 453). This study, as a qualitative exploration of the lived experience of white English-speaking South Africans who, for at least a significant portion of their day during the university term, share a racially desegregated space which is, arguably, not a privileged space (in that it is a historically coloured university), is positioned to offer insight into a context and an area of investigation which has not previously been the focus of very much academic attention in South African social psychology. In addition, if segregation plays such a fundamental role in setting up and maintaining inequality, both at a macro and micro level, it seems important to understand, from a qualitative perspective, the ways in which this is a part of co-researchers' experience of their relative privilege within the privileged and non-privileged desegregated spaces of their everyday life.

2.2.6 Racism and privilege

There is no single form of racism, as Foster (1999) has pointed out: "It manifests differentially over historical time and geocultural space in diverse forms such as slavery, genocide, economic exploitation, anti-Semitism, segregation, lynching, apartheid and 'ethnic cleansing'" (p. 331). With the political climate in South Africa which encourages racial tolerance, racism, it its most violent forms, is likely to be limited, with more subtle forms being predominant (Duckit, 1991, 1992; Pillay & Collings, 2004; Smith, Stones & Naidoo, 2003). It has been suggested that more traditional forms of racism, in a liberal environment, become restructured in more subtle guises (Dolby, 2000). This line of thinking has emerged with the growth, internationally and locally, of the concepts of *old-fashioned racism* and *symbolic racism* (Sears, 1988) on which much research has been conducted which suggests, despite convergent conceptualizations, a shift from old-fashioned racism in its blatant versions, to racisms which "…manifest in more muted or veiled terms" (Foster, 1999, p. 331).

While old-fashioned racism is more easily identified in blatant discriminative and hostile acts, symbolic racism, precisely because it is 'veiled', is more difficult to pin point, and thus apprehend. Foster (1999), drawing on Hopkins, Reicher, and Levine (1997) provides a clarification of symbolic racism:

> Strategically structured to avert charges of racism, this 'new', aversive or symbolic racism is rooted in arguments suggesting (a) the existence of a natural affinity between members of the same 'races', (b) a natural tendency towards avoidance or antagonism between members of different 'race', and (c) disavowals that power relations and structural inequalities are requirements for analysis and understanding of racism". (p. 331)

The abovementioned concepts, developed predominantly in America, have lead to the development of research instruments and methods which are more sensitive to symbolic racism in South Africa (Duckit & Foster, 1991). The type of racism described above by Foster (1999) is related directly to the experience of privilege; it is likely to entrench clusters of white privilege and marginalize 'others' through a 'natural affinity for members of the same race'. Not only that, structural power differences implicit in this setup are rejected through notions of race and racial issues being unimportant.

Recent research in South Africa on racial attitudes indicate that while traditional racism is less prevalent than symbolic racism, "old-fashioned racism has not simply been replaced by modern racism in contemporary South Africa, but rather that modern racism would appear to predominate, while significant vestiges of old-fashioned racism remain" (Pillay & Collings, 2004, p. 604). The conclusion reached here hinges on the fact that a significant number of students in their study evidenced both kinds of racism. In a four year follow-up study between 1995 and 1999, Smith, Stones and Naidoo (2003) noted evidence of a shift towards racial tolerance in young South Africans, however, the magnitude of the shifts observed were "small… and in some cases not quite statistically significant" (p. 42), indicating, as with Pillay and Collings' (2004) research, that racism is still an issue which requires both research and intervention in South Africa.

The research referred to earlier by Clack, et al. (2005) which investigated the 'micro-ecological processes' of segregation illustrates the importance of research on race conceptualizing racism, in one sense, as a subjective and personal experience, but also as existing within a broad social structure which exerts marginalizing effects, or, as Robus and Macleod (2006) have worded it, "…how to understand the mundane, everyday practices of individuals in relation to structural or macro-level issues" (p.

463), which suggests that individual experience be located within a framework of 'institutional racism'.

Use of the concept of institutional racism emerged in the 1960's in America and was, in certain contexts, referred to as 'internal colonialism' (Robus & Macleod, 2006), revealing its aim as an interrogation of class and raced based oppression and its Marxist affiliation (Foster, 1999). The term 'institutional racism' has been used broadly, making a unifying conceptualization of its use difficult, however, institutional racism has, in general, referred to 4 related sets of practices, as outlined by Robus and Macleod (2006), summarizing Barker's (1999) use of the concept:

> At one level, institutional racism has meant the imposing of rules and regulations that are discriminatory in effect, although perhaps not in intention. At a second, it has meant the pervading atmosphere of an organization (the canteen culture). At a third, it has implied the deliberate implementation of racist policy. And at a fourth, it has been conceptualized as institutions reflecting the fundamental racist nature of the society within which they operate. (p. 467)

Research by Robus and Macleod (2006) on the relationship between macro and micro level racism is particularly relevant to this study. As a criticism of recent research on race within social psychology in South Africa has been the predominant focus on 'privileged' space (Marx & Feltham-King, 2006), their findings become particularly pertinent as their research incorporated an analysis of discourse from staff and students from the University of Fort Hare, a historically black university under the apartheid government and, in contemporary South Africa, arguably, like the University of the Western Cape, not a privileged space relative to other historically white universities.

Analyzing the 'talk' of staff and students from Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare, Robus and Macleod (2006) found the prevalent discourse of "white excellence/black failure" (p. 478), whereby "individuals and institutions have to do no more than be white to be accorded with competence" (p. 478). Their study is noteworthy as it highlights both macro level institutional racism, of which the educational institutions and their histories are a part, and micro level processes of

every day talk and practices and, within this particular context, their inter-relationship in reproducing racism.

Robus and Macleod's (2006) study is relevant to this study, not only in context, but, if the kind of descriptions of lived experience which were sought in this study are considered, they correlate strongly with the salient discourse which emerged from their research participants, namely, that a person is accorded 'excellence' merely by virtue of belonging to, or identifying with, a 'racial' category.

The challenge of the micro level/ macro level analysis of racial phenomena is one that researchers have been grappling with since the 1920s and 1930s and which is even more pressing in race research today; research on race needs to appreciate the subjective and the social in balancing its approach. The point, as Foster (1993, 1999) has noted, is that racism cannot simply be situated in the heads of individuals, and cannot be understood on a purely individual level.

Psychoanalytic research and conceptualizations of racism, although accused along with mainstream psychology as being "positivistic", "mechanistic, reductionist and individualist" (Foster, 1999, p. 337), are also granted their place (by the same author) in race theorizing. Foster (1999) states: "In the hands of those… who recognize that racism is the product of a structure comprising three constituents—ideological, institutional, psychological—and that the structure as a whole changes over historical epochs, psychoanalysis takes on a progressive significance" (p. 338).

Hook (2004) has advocated Kristeva's (1982) feminist psychoanalytic theory of abjection, in particular, as an appropriate, socially relevant conceptualization of racism in a post-apartheid South African context. Abjection, as it relates to social structure, is described by Hook (2004) as such: "Abjection is a forceful physical, psychical, and symbolic response, an expulsive response on all of these levels, a violent attempt at restitution of an apparent affront to wholeness be it of the body, of identity, or of socio-symbolic structure" (p. 687). In this sense, abjection is concerned with the regulation of the boundaries of an acceptable identity (Hook, 2004) where the intent of the psychic process is to preserve a coherent and ordered 'inside' and repudiate a threatening, anxiety provoking 'outside'.

The most recent South African study to emerge applying the theory of abjection is a study by Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007) titled *Building a wall around themselves: Exploring adolescent masculinity and abjection with photo-biographical research*. As the title suggests, this study employed creative and innovative methodology whereby participants took photographs relevant to the research topic which spurred a personal narrative, both of which became the data for the study (Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007).

Although the focus of their study was masculinity and not race, some important and relevant results for this study emerged. In discussing narratives around 'privileged' sports (such as rugby) and 'non-privileged' sports (such as basketball and soccer) within a school setting, the authors commented that unprivileged sports were, at times, "idealized as places of 'real' racial harmony set against the white establishment" (p. 40), while at other times were perceived as being the sort of space where "boys who did not 'fit in' with the others" (p. 40) belong. Interestingly, these games, soccer in particular, took place literally on the periphery of the school away from the groups of mono-racial gatherings (Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007).

While there were narratives from Blackbeard and Lindegger's (2007) research participants which set up boundaried exclusive spaces, the authors pay more attention to counter normative and subversive discourses which emerged in the "voluntary inclusivity" (p. 40) of peripheral spaces, allowing the boys within their study to challenge dominant norms, such as racial segregation. However, participants in their study "…did not simply occupy a position in relation to a single hegemonic standard" (p. 41). "As with homophobic talk", the authors state, "the boys were emotionally invested in making distinctions, offering distances, and critiquing the cruder displays of racism while slipping into less reflective talk at other times (p. 41).

Although not from a psychoanalytic perspective, Cooper's (2003) findings from a study titled *Trade unionists and t-shirt makers: Constructing political identities that challenge 'whiteness'* concur with this notion in which he found trade unionists from the 1970s and a group of young South Africans from Laugh it off (LIO) finding peripheral space on the left from, and within which, they were able to construct political identities of self in relation to hegemonic discourses of whiteness and thus

contribute to changing the status quo, the apartheid government in the case of the former, and unchecked capitalism in the latter group. Like the participants in Blackbeard and Lindegger's (2007) study, individuals in Cooper's (2003) study did not occupy positions only of opposition; individuals were both within and part of, and outside of and in opposition to, 'whiteness'; as a quote from the LIO off website reads: "Basically, we're your kind of hypocrite" (in Cooper, 2003, p. 32).

The relevance of these studies to this study is that UWC may well be likened to the peripheral space within which 'counter normative' discourses are more accessible. It should be noted, however, that while the boys in their study critiqued and distanced themselves from 'crude displays of racism', the 'outside' (abject) space is for 'boys who don't fit in', for the unacceptable, *as well as* one of true racial harmony in which hegemonic discourses of segregation are challenged. Indeed the tension between these two aspects of experience might be understood as the "border-anxiety" of the "me, and not-me" (Hook, 2004, p. 685).

As Hook (2004) has explained, "…the abject is above all that which threatens, that which constantly plagues and disturbs identity, system and structure" (p. 685). Abjection is an exclusionary process "substantiated by the body's economy of separations and distinctions", providing us, Hook (2004) believes, "with tentative answers to the question of how the psychical density of racism articulates with greater macro-social forces of racism" (p. 695). The use of the theory of abjection in the abovementioned study by Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007) also displays the utility of psychoanalysis in conceptualizing racial phenomena in a critical and socially relevant way in post-apartheid South Africa.

2.2.7 Politics of the body, racism and white privilege

In a paper titled *The Consequence of Race Mixture: Racialized Barriers and the Politics of Desire*, Sexton (2003), referring to contemporary America, has argued that although intermarriage is not a necessary criteria for social equality, "most do agree that increasing rates of inter-marriage do indicate a progressive development, namely the erosion of racialized barriers and a waning of racist sentiments" (p. 250). Mercer too (1994, p. 116), has stated: "My sense is that questions of sexuality have come to

mark the interior limits of decolonization, where the utopian project of (black) liberation has come to grief" (in Sexton, 2003, p. 250).

If, as has been suggested, segregation, both on a macro and micro level, has been an instrument of racism in general, and marginalization in particular, attention should be paid to the body, with its micro-economy of 'separations and distinctions', as well as social circles, as sites of racialized inclusion and exclusion. Ratele (2005) has argued convincingly for scholarly attention being turned to intimacy in coming to understand "…the interior world of the African or black person in its relations to the politics and economy of superiority and separations" (p. 556).

An aspect of Ratele's (2005) focus is on "…*the external coordinates of inner life*" (p. 562, emphasis author's). "These coordinates", Ratele has stated, "are what circumscribe how people get to know and relate to others as well as themselves; part of the economic, cultural and political structures that define and track people's personal lives" (p. 562). The 'external coordinates' in a South African socio-historical context, Ratele argues, have given form to a kind of intimacy (and as such, the subjective experience of self and others) which is not a closeness, rather, as it relates to relationships between black and white South Africans, it is an intimacy of "apart-heid" (p. 567).

Although Ratele's focus is the interiority of black people and the ways in which a racist society is likely to structure the forms of intimacy experienced by black people, he acknowledges the likelihood of similar effects on white lives. The contouring and shaping effects of racist social structures as they are experienced by white and black South Africans have been, without doubt, quite different, though a similar lens might usefully be focused on intimacy as it is experienced, and creatively represented, by white South Africans. The quality of estrangement in the intimacy described by Ratele (2005), an "…'intimacy without attachment, warmth or reciprocity" (p. 567), has a lived reality from a 'white' perspective which is lacking in the literature of the psychology of race relations.

Ratele's has asserted that "(w)hite power and capitalism, with the help of the cover story provided by science, have a right to black bodies and do not care about what

those whose bodies they are feel or think" (2005, p. 567). While the state of race relations in post-apartheid South Africa is worlds apart from the degradation of apartheid, and scientific rhetoric lends less support to the cause of inequality, it is not uncommon to encounter diluted versions of the situation Ratele has described, in everyday post-apartheid South African life.

What is at stake is not only estrangement from fellow South Africans, as Ratele has argued, but from one's self through unwitting personal and social participation within a system of oppression and the ways in which one's sense of self (for example, as being an egalitarian or just person) is betrayed. Roy (2004) has explored this notion from an analytical psychology theoretical perspective, where an individual's identification with negative aspects of the "collective psyche" (p. 69), she has argued, "captures" (p. 70) and "smothers the ego" (p. 69). Her point relates both to the healthy psychology of individuals as well as to the transformation of "cultural complexes" (p. 72). Cock's (2001) warning of the moral debt accrued through exploitive, unequal relationships seems equally apt.

2.2.8 Concluding remarks

There is much to suggest from the literature reviewed that identities within a transforming South Africa are being re-negotiated, shifted, clung to; positions within the space and time of post apartheid South Africa are ambivalent, hopeful and restless. In addition, as it has been highlighted how important context is in understanding social phenomena, this study had a unique context from which to describe how a perceived position of relative advantage within a transforming country has been lived, from which meaning has been created and a way forward forged. Attention has been focused not only on the ways in which transformation has been resisted and segregation maintained, but on aspects of experience where segregation has been challenged and transformation participated in. From the review of literature, it seems as urgent to explore ways that white English-speaking South Africans have found ways out of segregation and have contributed towards equality as it is to understand how it has been resisted.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter a qualitative approach to research in the social sciences is defined and the grounds for a qualitative approach to researching social phenomena, from a psychological perspective, are described. The phenomenological research methodological framework which has informed this study has been set out and arguments for the appropriateness of a phenomenological research method to studying phenomena which are experienced within a socio-political context are presented. This is followed by a description of research participants and the procedures followed in conducting the study, including the collection and analysis of data. Finally, the researcher's reflexivity as well as an overview of the ethical considerations of this study are presented.

3.2 Research design

A qualitative research design has been used in this study. While there are differences between the various qualitative research approaches and the views of the broad philosophical traditions within which these approaches are situated, a common ontological assumption held by qualitative researchers is that 'reality' is subjective (Schurink, 1998) and thus, 'reality' is always an "interpreted reality" (Hurst, 1999, p. 32).

Following this assumption, qualitative research gives primacy to the goal of understanding subjective experience, rather than an objective reality; verstehen, rather than causal explanation; meaning, rather than facts. In contrast, epistemologically, a quantitative researcher assumes the attitude of the disinterested observer of that which is being studied (Fouché, 1990). The quantitative researcher believes in an objective reality "…which can be explained, controlled and predicted by means of natural (cause-effect) laws" (Schurink, 1998, p. 242).

Qualitative approaches, due to a generally shared ontology and epistemology, are unified by several shared characteristics with regard to methodology. Firstly, qualitative research takes a "naturalistic approach" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2) to what is being studied. Research subjects' experience of a phenomenon is studied in

natural, everyday settings; *where* research is conducted, in this sense, unifies different qualitative approaches.

Secondly, qualitative research, generally speaking, is a hermeneutic exercise; it is an "interpretation of meaning" (Bleicher, 1980, p. 1). Research from a qualitative approach places focus on interpretation by the researcher of the meaning given to natural social settings by research subjects and, on the up close, rich detail of subjective experience (Cresswell, 1998). The researcher is thus intimately involved, methodologically, with what he or she is studying by interactively entering research subjects' everyday world and inductively exploring meaning and subjective experience, rather than taking up a position of neutral observation of the facts.

Implicit in the core assumptions which inform the methodological approach taken by qualitative researchers is the value laden nature of qualitative research and the knowledge which it produces (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). On the value laden nature of qualitative research, Cresswell (1998) has emphasised the deep personal interest qualitative researchers have in the topic which they are researching. Qualitative researchers accept that knowledge is context bound, thus contextual issues, including the role of the researcher as part of the context within which knowledge is produced, are, in a holistic way, part of the conceptualization of the phenomenon (Bannister, Burman, Parker, Taylor & Tindall, 1994).

As very little research has been conducted in a South African context on the phenomenon of privilege, particularly as a psychological experience, a qualitative exploration of the phenomenon was an appropriate means of approaching the topic. Furthermore, due to the complexity, sensitivity and feeling laden nature of racial phenomena, particularly racial inequality, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate means of exploring and gaining an understanding of the experience of the phenomenon of privilege, as it has been lived, understood and given meaning by white English-speaking South Africans. Phenomenology, in particular, lends itself as a research method able to capture the *lived* experience of a social phenomenon and the meaning which is given to that experience.

3.3 Phenomenological research

Phenomenology has as its focus the lived experience of a phenomenon within the context of a person's everyday life. In eliciting descriptions of first hand experience of being privileged within the context of co-researchers' everyday lives in post-apartheid South Africa, what was sought was the psychological meaning that constituted the experience (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003).

Language, in a phenomenological sense, is descriptive; it describes meaningful experience within a context- its 'objects', its space and time qualities- as they are presented to a person's consciousness; consciousness not merely as a "neutral presenter of objects or givens", as Giorgi (1997, p. 236) has pointed out, but rather, as that which "contributes to the very meaning of such objects by its varying modes, styles, forms and so forth" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 236). The aim of the phenomenological method is to capture, as faithfully as possible, the way in which a phenomenon appears to a person, searching for the most invariant structures, or essences, of an experience, so as to come to know 'the thing itself' *more closely*.

From a phenomenological approach, in line with other approaches to qualitative research, what was important is not so much the real character of 'objects', but the subjective 'reality' of, and meaning given to, a phenomenon; specifically, a phenomenological approach achieves this by focussing on *perceptions* of 'real objects'.

The implied philosophical assumption of this abovementioned notion is that 'the thing itself' actually exists; inequality and, as such, advantage and disadvantage exists and can be perceived and experienced. In its application to this study, privilege is taken to be a 'thing'. Privilege is taken to entail 'objects' which exist in space and time, but also to constituted by 'presences' which are more psychological in nature (Giorgi, 1997). Thus, a phenomenological approach entailed a focus on how various spatial contexts and social spaces are perceived. By its definition, privilege is also relative to others. This necessarily implies a focus on perceived relationships to others within these spaces. These are the dimensions by which and within which privilege presented itself, or appeared to, co-researchers and it was experience within these dimensions which was taken to have been described verbally, with language, during interviews,

though it is accepted that descriptions of the experience remain "approximate, incomplete knowledge of the thing itself" (Spinelli, 1989, p. 16).

It is assumed by phenomenological researchers that everyday subjective experience is a valid source of knowledge, containing rich and insightful meanings which can contribute to the understanding of a phenomenon (Becker, 1992). Giorgi (1997) has explained the concept of essence, or invariant structure, by way of an analogy to statistics; invariant structures of experience, Giorgi (1997) has explained, can be understood as "'measures of central tendency'" which show "…how the phenomenon being investigated coheres or converges (p. 249).

Edwards (1991) has pointed out that the derivation of essence, or structures, of an experience, "…is a realistic goal where a fairly circumscribed experience is being described" (p. 62). "When", he continues, "the experience is complex and involves a series of partially connected experiences over a period of time, this sort of general structure is, however, quite inappropriate" and becomes "an unhelpful lowest common denominator of a set of very different experiences" (p. 62).

This study has a relatively circumscribed socio-political, cultural and socioeconomic context within which the phenomenon was explored as well as a fairly narrow focus on psychological experience within that context, making the derivation of structures 'a realistic goal'. Privilege as a broad phenomenon, with all of its possible existential dimensions, was within the scope of this study only insofar as that experience could be related to the psychological experience of privilege in a post-apartheid context as a white English-speaking young adult.

An example which might serve to illustrate this abovementioned point more clearly was one co-researcher who described aspects of her experience of privilege in what might be called 'esoteric terms', with the universe and its karmic flow as the context within which privilege had been experienced. While her subjective reality is not denied, this description was only useful by relating it to experience within everyday spaces of post-apartheid South Africa and through the description being able to inform how everyday situations with other South Africans are perceived, experienced and given meaning. In this way, the circumscribed context to which all descriptions of

the experience of privilege have been related is sufficiently narrow to make the derivation of structures and essences both realistic, and useful.

Emphasis in the application of the phenomenological method is placed on a *description* of the way in which a phenomenon has presented itself to a person, however, a clarification of the interpretive aspect of the phenomenological method and the way it has been applied to this research process is also necessary. The methodology employed has taken guiding coordinates from arguments proposed by Kruger (1991) on the role of interpretation in phenomenological research.

On the derivation of essences and structures from co-researchers' descriptions, Kruger (1991) states, "the meaning of this description will not emerge unless one has insight" (p. 115). The 'insight' which Kruger refers to has two elements to it, a translative and an interpretive element. Regarding the former, it is a translation of everyday descriptions into psychological language, or, in Giorgi's (1997) words, a translation of the "pre-theoretical" and "pre-scientific" description of a co-researcher's "life-world" into psychological language, "re-described more rigorously from the perspective of a chosen discipline" (p. 249).
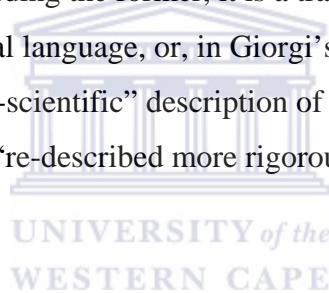
Regarding the latter, Kruger (1991) has argued that "…interpretation is as important in psychological research as it is in psychotherapy" (p. 115), lest research become "merely a repetition" (Kruger, 1991, p. 118), albeit an interpreted repetition. In the methodology employed in this study it has been through both the translative element of interpretation, as well as the interpretation of relationships between the different parts of described experience, that essential or structural descriptions have been able to be insightful and more than 'mere repetition'. This has also allowed the phenomenological dictum of 'not transcending the given' to be foregrounded, importantly, as it is in 'the given' descriptions of perceptions, that rich and insightful subjective reality lies.

A phenomenological method has been able to offer a methodological approach to studying the phenomenon of privilege which reveals the phenomenon's subjective, inter-subjective, spatial and emergent qualities through giving primacy to 'lived experience'. While racial phenomena, such as desegregation and segregation,

inclusion and exclusion, within various contexts of post-apartheid South Africa certainly find expression discursively, in everyday 'talk', these have an embodied and lived subjective reality which requires description if any understanding of the "boundary regulation" (Dixon, et al., 2005, p. 403) occurring within everyday spaces is to be gained.

As phenomenological research derives structures of a phenomenon, it was required, in planning this study, to ask, 'of what relevance and use will that structure be?' The question has been answered by Fouché (1990) in a paper titled *The phenomenological Reduction and its Relevance to Social Science and Ideology Critique*. In discussing the place of phenomenology in addressing social and cultural values through research which leads to reflection, or eidetic reduction, Fouché (1990) states:

> A methodically applied epoché of what we thought we knew gives rise to a sense of puzzlement, of no longer seeing our knowledge as translucently self evident… our only weapon against ideology is a perpetual questioning of the meaning of social phenomena. (pp. 382-383)

With Fouché's comments in mind, a description of the essence of the experience of privilege is socially relevant as it provides a description of the meaning of lived experience which is, through reflection, perpetually emerging. Phenomenology has offered a methodological approach able to access new possibilities of *being* in a historical period in a country which calls for new ways of being, for 'boundary dissolution' and for transformation.

3.4 Co-researchers and research setting
3.4.1 Selection of co-researchers
In order to gather a depth and richness of experience, sampling in a phenomenological study aims to gain access to co-researchers who have had first hand, lived experience of the phenomenon in focus (Moustakis, 1994). In a phenomenological study a purposive sampling method which employs a set of inclusion criteria is thus an appropriate approach to selecting co-researchers (Cresswell, 1998).

In this study a combination of purposive and snow ball sampling has been used to select co-researchers from the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences at UWC. Snowball sampling is defined as the method of beginning with one member of a group who meets the study's inclusion criteria, who then refers the researcher to another member (Schurink, 1998, p. 254). Three co-researchers who met the inclusion criteria were selected purposively using the inclusion criteria described below. The researcher was referred to a further five co-researchers, all students within the Community and Health Sciences Faculty at UWC, who met the inclusion criteria for the study.

Inclusion criteria for the study were that participants were between the ages of 18 and 26, 'white' (defined, within the study, as the racial category with which a person identifies), English-speaking (defined within the study as being English first language, home language, or having at least one parent who is English-speaking) and a South African citizen.

Co-researchers were asked whether they saw themselves as being privileged, making inclusion in the study, apart from the abovementioned inclusion criteria, subjectively determined and dependent on acknowledgement of having had experience of the phenomenon. Seven out of eight co-researchers stated that they see themselves as *being* privileged, while one co-researcher stated that she did not see herself as *being* privileged, but that she had experienced aspects of privilege in her everyday life and, for this reason, her description was included in the study.

Sex was not an inclusion criterion in this study, although significant effort was made to include a balanced number of male and female co-researchers. As there were a limited number of white English-speaking South African students registered within the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences at UWC, almost all of whom were female, all eight co-researchers interviewed were female students.

3.4.2 Description of participants

Table 3.1 gives on overview of the demographic and biographical profile of co-researchers, though some details which may make co-researchers identifiable have been excluded from the table in order to ensure confidentiality (Preston-Whyte, 1990).

All co-researchers were students at UWC during 2007 and were enrolled for courses in Departments falling under the Community and Health Sciences Faculty of UWC. One co-researcher was a post-graduate student and the remaining seven were undergraduate students.

All co-researchers were female, with ages of co-researchers ranging between 18 and 25 years. Seven out of the eight co-researchers had their own cars, while one co-researcher used lifts from friends and family (not public transport). Five out of the eight co-researchers interviewed had part-time employment and made a contribution to their accommodation costs and tuition fees. One co-researcher lived in her own accommodation funded by her parent/s, two co-researchers lived in their own accommodation funded jointly by parent/s and by themselves, two co-researchers lived with their parent/s, two co-researchers resided with extended family and one co-researcher lived with her partner. Three co-researchers attended private schools, two attended government schools, two attended model-C schools and one co-researcher attended a semi-private school.
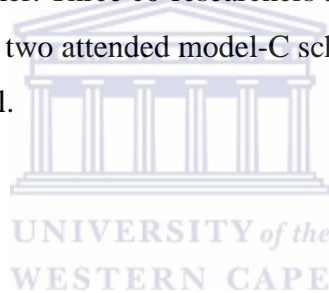
Table 3.1 Demographic and biographic variables

NAME	AGE	SEX	LEVEL OF STUDY	TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED	MODE OF TRANSPORT	LIVING ARRANGE-MENTS	Part-time work
Jess	25	Female	Post-grad	Private	Own car	Own accommodation funded by parent/s	No
Fiona	21	Female	Undergrad	Private	Own car	Lives with parent/s	Yes
Emma	23	Female	Undergrad	Government	Own car	Own accommodation funded by parent/s and self	Yes
Sophie	18	Female	Undergrad	Model-C	Private lifts	Lives with extended family	No
Nadia	20	Female	Undergrad	Semi-private	Own car	Lives with extended family	Yes
Jocelyn	20	Female	Undergrad	Private	Own car	Own accommodation funded by parents and self	Yes
Corlia	Un-known	Female	Undergrad	Model-C	Own car	Lives with partner	Yes
Talia	25	Female	Undergrad	Government	Own car	Lives with parent/s	No

3.4.3 Procedure

Once ethical approval was sought from the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences and the Dean provided permission, co-researchers were approached to participate in the study. 'White' English-speaking students within Community and Health Sciences Faculty were identified with the help of administrative staff. Telephonic contact was made with potential co-researchers and the study was briefly introduced by the researcher. Eight co-researchers were selected to be interviewed and interviews were arranged for a time convenient to co-researchers.

On meeting co-researchers in person, the study, including the aims of the research, was explained in more detail by the researcher. It was explained to co-researchers that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point. Before interviews commenced, confidentiality, meaning that pseudonyms would be used in order to assure their anonymity, was explained. Permission was obtained from co-researchers to use a digital recorder to ensure accuracy of the data captured. It was explained that recordings and transcripts would be destroyed on completion of the study. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher.
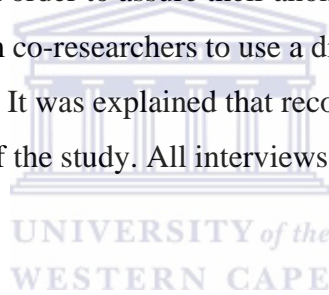
Interviews took place at the UWC Psychology Department as this was a convenient venue and offered quiet and confidential office space in which to conduct interviews. Permission was obtained from the Psychology Department Head to use a particular vacant office in the Department. Although the office was centrally located within the Psychology Department, it was secluded from the view of people in the building. Privacy was ensured by testing whether speech was audible from outside of the office and windows were closed during interviews. Interviews were conducted during the hot month of February and a fan was kindly lent to the researcher by administrative staff from the Psychology Department to ensure that co-researchers and the researcher were comfortable during interviews. It was requested that co-researchers fill out a short biographical information form before commencement of the interview (see Appendix A) and informed consent was obtained (see Appendix C).

3.4.4 Data Collection

Interviews were utilized to capture the experience and lived meaning of co-researchers' everyday world (Kvale, 1996). Face to face individual interviews were conducted between the researcher and co-researchers. In this way the researcher himself was the major instrument of data collection (Patton, 2002). As mentioned in the previous sub-section, co-researchers were asked to fill out a brief biographical questionnaire before the interview commenced, and as such, the biographical information form was also a tool of data collection. A further form of data collected during interviews was the qualitative observations and impressions of co-researchers' body language as well as the emotional tone of co-researchers' descriptions noted by the researcher. A research journal containing these impressions and observations was kept by the researcher.

Interviews were opened with co-researchers being asked to describe any situation in which they had experienced privilege in their everyday life. Interviews flowed from this initial description made by co-researchers. Pre-formulated questions were developed as an interview guide in order to elicit descriptions of various aspects of everyday experience of the phenomenon, though it was preferred that textures and structures of co-researcher's experience emerge through them naturally describing their experience.

Pre-formulated questions were thus used in line with Moustakis' (1994) recommendations, where an interview guide is utilized "…when the co-researcher's story has not tapped into the experience qualitatively and with sufficient meaning and depth" (p. 116). The 'topical guide' used in the study included co-researcher's home and family life, experience on the UWC campus, social life and personal experience of transformation processes in post-apartheid South Africa. Each area of experience was introduced in a general, unstructured and open way, allowing co-researchers to express their experience in their own words and in their own way.

Once these broad areas had been explored co-researchers were asked whether there was any other area of everyday life, significant in understanding the experience of the phenomenon, which had not been covered during the course of the interview, or context within which the phenomenon had been experienced in their everyday life.

Several rich descriptions from co-researchers emerged in response to this question. Interviews were thus conducted in an open and flexible way, although were given direction by a research question.

As interviews required in-depth descriptions, it was estimated that each interview would take between one and a half to two hours. No interview went beyond this estimated time. The shortest interview was 40 minutes due to a prior commitment of one co-researcher.

3.4.5 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was directed by an approach recommended by Moustakis (1994, pp. 121-122) who provides modified versions of two methods of data analysis which can be applied to the organizing of phenomenological data. His modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen method of data analysis was used to analyze the interview transcripts. For each of the eight co-researchers the following procedure was followed:

Each transcript was first read several times in order to get a holistic sense of the description. Statements were found in the interviews about how co-researchers experience the phenomenon and significant statements were listed out (horizonalization of the data). Each statement was treated as having equal worth and a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements was developed. Statements were then clustered into meaning units and these were listed. A textural description- the 'what' of the experience- was then written up, including verbatim examples**.**

A structural description was then constructed using the process of imaginative variation, as outlined by Moustakis (1994). According to Moustakis, there are 4 main steps to the imaginative variation process: "Systematic variation of the possible structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings" (p. 99), a recognition "of the underlying themes or contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomenon" (p. 99), consideration of "the universal structures that precipitate feelings and thoughts with reference to the phenomenon , such as the structure of space, time, bodily concerns, materiality, causality, relation to self or relation to others" (p. 99), and a "search for exemplifications that vividly illustrate the invariant structural themes and

facilitate the development of a structural description of the phenomenon" (p. 99). An overall description of the meaning and essence of the experience was then constructed, i.e. a textural-structural description**.**

Once the above steps were completed for all eight co-researchers, a composite textural-structural description was constructed which included textural-structural descriptions from all eight co-researchers.

The analysis of the data required the establishment of what was subjectively true for the researcher, a bracketing of this (epoché), and then turning to the transcripts to understand through co-researchers descriptions, what was subjectively true for them about the experience of the phenomenon of privilege (Moustakis, 1994). These steps are outlined in a linear fashion, though the analysis of the data required the constant engagement of the researcher in simultaneous processes, or at least an ongoing back and forth sequence to the process as a whole. The epoché process was not a once off exercise simply because the phenomenon of privilege is not something experienced once off, but is encountered daily, in new instances, which bring forth different textures (feelings, thoughts, judgments) of experience and new and different structural qualities of experience through self reflection. In this sense, epoché, as it was carried out in this study, was the first step in the back and forth sequence which constituted the data analysis process. The epoché process was thus a stance taken up during the research process, a 'phenomenological attitude' towards the data, rather than one leg of a multi-stage process.

Fouché (1990) has stated that while the phenomenological philosopher brackets "the natural attitude both on a common sense and a theoretical level" (p. 376), methodologically, the social scientist brackets only that which is likely to hinder the progress of the research, namely theoretical understandings of the phenomenon which already exist within the given field. This however, does not imply a 'forgetting' of past research or theoretical understandings, but a bracketing of this, as Kruger (1979) has argued: "Clearly anyone setting out to investigate any phenomenon systematically and rigorously is, from the beginning, guided by what is already understood about the phenomenon (p. 144).

While certain preconceptions may have directed the research methodologically in the analysis of the data, this was not carried out in a deductive process, looking for confirmation of existing theories. Rather, presuppositions of the researcher, in whatever form, directed attention to certain aspects of the experience of the phenomenon which were inductively explored. Presuppositions were taken as coordinates for the exploration of meaning, with the researcher taking up an attitude open to radical revision of what was previously known (Fouché, 1990). Epoché is thus a means of making what has guided the researcher explicit, rather than bracketing that which prevents a disinterested observation of the data (Kruger, 1990).

Edwards' (1991) criticism of the "transcendental attitude" as "absurd" (p. 65) should be noted as a caution to the uncritical assumption of a transcendental attitude. While he acknowledges the ethical contribution that the phenomenological method has made, he is particularly critical of the chasm between the ideal (or theoretical) version of this notion, and the actual version which appears in research papers. The employment of bracketing was taken in this study as a methodological standard to be striven for, though one which is practically impossible, allowing relatively uncontaminated textural-structural descriptions to emerge.

Empathic engagement with the data required the bracketing of the researcher's experience constantly, however it was also necessary that these be held onto, in a separate space, as in these lay the very motivation for the research itself, the curiosity to enquire about the lived experience of the phenomenon of others; the desire to come closer to "intersubjective reality" (Moustakis, 1994, p. 57). As Moustakis (1994) has stated of the phenomenological researcher's personal interest in and intimate connection with the phenomenon being studied: "The puzzlement is autobiographical" (p59) and the establishment of intersubjective reality begins with a personal sense of what the experience entails.

3.4.6 Credibility and dependability

The credibility of qualitative research is established during the research process, while it is being undertaken (Terre Blanche & Durheim, 1999). The credibility and dependability of this study was ensured by aiming to be as open and empathic as was

possible during the collection of data and by striving to accurately describe the life-world of co-researchers through a methodologically rigorous process.

It is recommended that phenomenological researchers pose the following 5 questions to themselves to ensure the validity of research findings (Moustakis, 1994, p. 57):

1   "Did the interviewer influence the contents of the subjects' descriptions in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the subjects' actual experience?

2   "Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

3   "In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived?

4   "Is it possible to go from the general structural descriptions to the transcriptions and to account for the specific contents and connections in the original examples of the experience?

5   "Is the structural description context specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations?"

Regarding Moustakis' (1994) first question over 'interviewer influence', the bracketing of preconceptions facilitated a listening to, and enquiring about, co-researchers' experience in an 'open' and 'naïve' way during interviews (Moustakis, 1994). When descriptions were not clearly understood by the researcher, clarifying questions were asked. Notes were taken during interviews and if it occurred to the researcher that different aspects of a co-researcher's experience may be related, an open question about this possible relationship was posed, asking for the co-researcher's thoughts. In this way, interviews were an interactive engagement concerned with arriving at the most accurate description of the co-researcher's experience that was possible.

Regarding Moustakis' (1994) second question about the accuracy of transcription, interviews were transcribed by the researcher himself in order to ensure that transcriptions were read with a sense of the emotional tone of descriptions. In constructing textural descriptions, recordings were once again listened to. Notes were taken during and after interviews, recording qualitative impressions during the interviews, including co-researchers' body language and the emotional tone of

interviews. These impressions and notes were used to substantiate interview transcripts.

Moustakis' third question regarding 'the analysis of data and alternative conclusions' is particularly challenging as if conclusions have not been suggested because they have not been perceived by the researcher, then they are necessarily unknown to the researcher. As all eight co-researchers were female, it is possible that aspects of their experience as females have been described, but as a male, the researcher has not been perceptive enough to pick up these themes. To decrease the likelihood of this, textural-structural descriptions were given to female colleagues as well as a female supervisor to ensure that the conclusions reached did not exclude something fundamental. Findings and conclusions have also been discussed with female colleagues.Qualitative text always contains many possible meanings and as such, there is always a degree of interpretation involved in qualitative data analysis.

Durrheim and Terre Blanche (1999) recommend that the qualitative researcher collect material from as many, and as diverse, sources as possible. They refer to this method as triangulation, as a phenomenon can be understood from different vantage points. Triangulation in this study involved the primary form of data, the interview transcript, and also the biographical information form, qualitative impressions noted during and after interviews and the recordings of interviews which were listened to during the construction of textural descriptions and once again on completion of textural-structural descriptions. Qualitative impressions were important in capturing a full sense of co-researchers experience, as Kruger (1979) has noted in describing "human bodiliness" (p. 38) from a phenomenological perspective: "The body, in fact, shapes itself according to its task in the world" (p. 40) and these impressions substantiate findings.

A contribution towards triangulation in the study, and generally towards the dependability and credibility of the study, was a good understanding of the academic environment within which interviews were conducted. Co-researchers were not explaining their experience within a context which was unfamiliar to the researcher.

Regarding Moustakis' (1994) fourth question over the coherence between structural descriptions and the transcriptions, interview transcripts have been re-read in conjunction with textural-structural descriptions to ensure coherence between data and structures of experience described. In ensuring that structural descriptions were true to descriptions provided by co-researchers there was a constant process of 'returning to the transcript'. There was a constant focus on drawing themes only from the data, in other words, not going beyond 'the given'.

The fourth question posed by Moustakis (1994) concerns the context specificity of findings. As has been outlined, the phenomenon of privilege within this study does have a fairly circumscribed context within which it has been experienced. South Africa has a unique socio-political and socioeconomic context, thus generalizability to groups outside of South Africa is limited. UWC itself is a unique kind of academic space within South Africa with a specific political history. The intention of this study was not to conduct research where findings were generalizable, but rather to understand how, within specific desegregated contexts, inequality is experienced by individuals who are privileged. In this sense, structural descriptions are context specific.
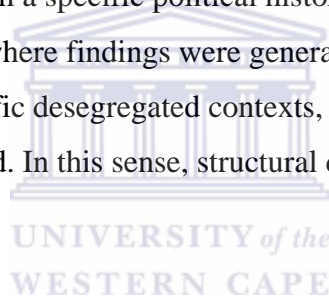
Structures of experience of the phenomenon of privilege may not be essential to the broad phenomenon of privilege, but are rather essential to the experience of privilege, as defined by co-researchers. Essences are thus also invariant structures of the experience of precisely the kind of privilege co-researchers described. Generalization of findings beyond this should be cautious. This is not to say that findings are applicable locally only, i.e. within South Africa, or even within the Western Cape or the UWC, however, findings are specific to the context in which the phenomenon has been experienced.

3.4.7 Reflexivity

This section has been approached by taking one theme which emerged from co-researchers descriptions and reflecting on the role and impact of the researcher in the emergence of that theme and then expanding on that to more general aspects of the research process. In taking this approach, two key questions are used to organize this reflection: firstly, how were co-researchers lead by the researcher to describe their

experience in the way in which they did? And secondly, post data collection, in which ways were these themes perceived in the data by the researcher, in other words, to what extent was the data organized into a pattern which has its genesis in the structures of experience which belong to the researcher?

The theme of co-researchers differentiating themselves from other (racist) whites and by so doing forging an anti-racist element to their personal identity is taken as a poignant example as in this theme the dynamics of researcher-co-researcher-phenomenon are most clearly configured. In response to both questions, findings should not, in fact it cannot, be taken as anything but a description of an inter-subjective reality (Giorgi, 1997; Moustakis, 1994). Co-researchers, with regard to this theme, described, as in several other studies reviewed (Blackbeard & Lindegger, 2007; Cooper, 2003; Steyn 2001), finding space from which they were able to be critical of the ways in which privilege is maintained and reproduced.

This is an aspect of being white in post-apartheid South Africa I have perceived within myself. I have only been able to enquire about experience during interviews, and perceive in the data post data collection, those aspects of experience to which I have been alerted, either through personal experience of being a white English-speaking South African, or through the review of relevant literature (though the former seems more important here). This study itself is a product constructed in a space found from which white privilege can be challenged. As co-researchers presented their anti-racist selves in this way, so this thesis is a similar kind of presentation of a subversive self.

Similarly, the theme of a 'split subjectivity', of experience of privilege entailing a critique of other whites, but also of oneself, resonates with my own experience. While this might be understood as merely being a relevant finding, applicable to another white person who happens to be the researcher, what is more likely is that co-researchers have been lead, in an open and curious way, to these corners of the experience of being privileged as a white English-speaking young adult by the researcher. What has been striven for was to make that process methodical and rigorous.

Regarding other themes and the research process in general, it is believed that an open enough stance was provided during interviews in facilitating an honest description by co-researchers of their lived experience. With regard to the second issue of the organization of the data post data collection, by fully describing the experience of the phenomenon of privilege as the researcher continually and by following rigorous methodological procedures, it has enabled, or at least made it more likely, that that which belongs to the researcher and that of co-researcher have been separated and isolated. Epoché, or bracketing, has been central to this task. 'Bracketing' here not meaning that preconceptions are blocked out, but that they are explicitly present, filling out that empty signifier, 'the researcher', with a subjective position, including the personal interest in the research topic and the kind of curiosity which has driven enquiry during the study. To exclude this subjective position would be irresponsible and not aid in a contextual understanding of the findings.

Regarding the gendered aspects of the research process, there were times during the research process that the methods used felt, problematically, like the conceptual politicizing of female co-researchers' lived experience, particularly when that experience related to intimacy and intimate relationships. Discussion during interviews which clearly framed the body as both a personal and a political space were not problematic as the focus of attention and the way in which that attention was focussed was clear, rather, it was particularly during the analysis of the interview transcripts, that this was most felt, where co-researchers were absent, or, rather, present, but passively so.

 This issue has been approached in the study in two related ways: firstly, by adhering to the phenomenological notion of 'not transcending the given', it apprehends a conceptual misappropriation of corporeal experience and, secondly, the use of the term 'co-researcher' foregrounds a faithfulness to the meanings of experience described by co-researchers. This approach also positioned the researcher as being responsible for the derivation of the psychological essence of the experience by way of translating co-researchers' descriptions and by relating descriptions to each other, but co-researchers descriptions were taken as being meaning-*full*, in and of themselves. This approach therefore, constructed a research 'space' where the female

co-researchers' role in the study was active in determining the meaning of their experiences.

3.4.8 Ethical considerations

Racial inequality is a sensitive and delicate issue for many people in South Africa. Despite this, it is a subject that requires in-depth analysis if more accurate descriptions of the tensions that underlie race relations in post-apartheid South Africa are to be made more visible. By so doing, everyday experience, as Fouché (1990) has stated, undergoes a "transition from the unreflective to the reflective" (p. 382).

This task, in a post-apartheid South Africa where racial issues are sensitive, calls for serious consideration of the ethics involved with such a project. The ethical considerations of the study involved responsibility to co-researchers, ensuring that no harm came to them, as well as an academic responsibility to produce credible findings (Preston-Whyte, 1990) and the steps that were taken to ensure this have been outlined below.

Approval to undertake this study, as it was formerly proposed by the researcher, was granted by the Higher Degrees Committee of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences of UWC. Informed consent for each participant was obtained and confidentiality of the identity of each interviewee was ensured. In order to achieve this, pseudonyms were used and certain biographical information which may have made co-researchers identifiable has been excluded in the presentation of findings.

According to Banister, et al. (1994), participants need to be protected from harm and their psychological health, well being, values and dignity need to be preserved at all times. If, for example, co-researchers shared an experience in which they had perceived themselves as acting in a way which would provoke a reaction from the communities to which they belong (for example, UWC, racially integrated groups of friends, church congregations or extended family) this reaction may constitute 'harm' coming to them; they may, for example, be ostracized by communities which are personally important to them. Ensuring confidentiality for co-researchers thus created an ethical research space where the abovementioned 'harm' would not come to them,

and also where it was safe for them to fully describe their experience so that credible findings could be produced.

Should it have been necessary, counselling services were available to co-researchers through the Institute for Counselling at UWC. Although this option was made available, no co-researcher required counselling.

3.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented the methodological approach adopted in this study, and the procedures followed in conducting this study. As Patton (1990) has stated, "how you study the world determines what you learn about the world" (p. 67). The following chapter presents the findings that the phenomenological methods described above have been able to yield and as such, are a description of the phenomenological experience of being privileged as a white English-speaking young adult in post-apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The spatiality of the experience of privilege, how the spaces of everyday life in post-apartheid South Africa are perceived, imagined, inhabited and shared becomes apparent in co-researchers' descriptions of *what* privilege is to them. Whether attention is focused upon the literal space of one's home or church, one's 'home' within South Africa, the openings and opportunities of academic/educational and professional positions or one's body, there is a spatiality to the experience of privilege as a young white English speaking South African which entails spaces perceived as historically black and spaces perceived as historically white which, more or less, can be translated into perceived historically disadvantaged and historically privileged spaces, respectively; privilege has been experienced within, and in relation to, both kinds of spaces, though the experience varies, bringing to one's attention different features of "the system of embodied-self-world-others" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 238).

The essence of the lived experience of the phenomenon of privilege, as it has been described by co-researchers, is portrayed in the following themes and sub-themes:

1. Privilege as support and protection around one

2. Privilege insulates, isolates and alienates

   2.1 A dissimilar "*life path*"

   2.2 Meta-stereotypes of privilege

   2.3 Grades of racial integration

3. Othering other whites: split subjectivities of being privileged as a white English speaking young adult

   3.1 'I'm not like them'

   3.2 Movement away from other racist whites/ movement away from an-other racist white self

4. Attributing privilege to hard work first and to historical inequality second

5. Ambivalence about transformation: feeling support for, and having negative feelings about, transformation

   5.1 Perceptions of a shifting social and economic landscape

   5.2 The vicissitudes of other whites around one signal the worst possibilities: 'it doesn't affect me but…'

5.3 Unsettling perceptions of inequality

6. Perceived role in South Africa as privileged English-speaking whites

4.2 Privilege as support and protection around one

Privilege, for co-researchers, is perceived in a support network around one, particularly familial support: "*I can imagine being unemployed for maybe a month if I screw up, or something, but then I've got such a large family base of privilege and support and employment and the buying of property, which not a lot of people can even do, and that's there and if anything did ever go devastatingly wrong there is always that backup*" (Jess). Here this co-researcher perceives privilege in property and in access to employment. In a sense, it is perceived in access to privileged space, including access to healthcare: "*We can go and see a naturopath, but out in the poorer communities they don't have that option. They see the Dr, and only if the Dr is there*" (Talia). It is perceived in the various opportunities one has been given, particularly educational opportunities: "*…just being able to know that I can study, go to school, get a job one day, stay in my own flat, you know, that type of thing*" (Emma).

Privilege is perceived in the relative ease with which things are made to happen and the way in which one's experience is believed to be different and easier than many other young previously disadvantaged South Africans with whom common spaces are shared, such as university: "*I'm getting a car really soon, my parents are sending it to me…A lot of people here have to use public transport. And you know what our public transport is like in this country. So that's a kind of privilege, I guess*" (Nadia), and part-time work: "(my place of part-time work)…*is right near my house and I have a friend who worked with me who was coloured. He had to travel from pretty far and he used public transport…I was buying some things with the money I earned, but I didn't really need to work, I could always have asked for things… He had to buy different things, more like essential stuff, to live*" (Nadia). It is perceived in the stability of one's home environment and its relative comfort and spaciousness: "*I mean often they're having to live, a family of 5, 6, 7, 10, in something which is smaller than my garage* (Talia)".

As can be seen from co-researchers' quotes, privilege is experienced as something relative; it is an acknowledgement of difference and, of an absence of the imagined difficulties in the people's lives theirs are privileged in relation to. Privilege is felt not only as a presence (of opportunity, access, support, insulation and comfort), but also as an absence of poverty and its associated difficulties: "*There aren't specific worries that I have that I need to worry about. There are no big problems that I have to worry about and I think that makes me privileged, you know, not having a huge mountain on my shoulders*" (Sophie).

For one co-researcher in particular it was not the perception of *actual* education or *actual* wealth, but being a member of a group of South Africans about which certain things are assumed, which is a part of 'what' privilege is: "*…maybe if you walk into a, uh, maybe a Dr's consulting room, they are going to assume that you have medical aid and they are going to assume certain class things about you. So I don't know if you can call that privilege, but people expect certain things from you, they expect that you are literate and that you have some sort of education, or whatever, but with black people that may not be the case…*" (Jocelyn)". Privilege in this sense, is what people assume about you and the phenomenon of privilege appears to her in what has been referred to as a meta-perception (Finchilescu, 2005). Simply put, meta-perceptions are beliefs people holds about how others perceive them (Finchilescu, 2005). This is discussed in further detail in section 4.3.2.

4.3 Privilege insulates, isolates and alienates
4.3.1 A dissimilar "*life path*"
While one aspect of the insulation of privilege is protective and supportive, another is alienating; there is a perceived lack of common ground with people who have not shared "*…a similar life path*" (Jess). When co-researchers focus on this aspect of their experience, it is with reference to an expressed desire for South Africa to be racially integrated. Although co-researchers professed commitment to racial integration and agreement about the rightness of the principle, they were ambivalent about its effects in real life.

The alienating aspects of privilege are experienced by some co-researchers as mild, transient and vague. For others the alienating aspects of privilege materialize into

more definable scenarios: "*My community is very white, very English, you know, it's very elitist, kind of, and I don't think I have consciously sought that out, but it's just where I have been my whole life. If you go to a certain school you stay in that stream…I found it very difficult working with people who had a very different mind set to me and a very different, uh, life path, to me, in a way…It was fine and we got along fine and had coffee, but I would never really have considered seeing them outside of the work place because they don't really give me anything back, in a way, like, I didn't really get anything out of the relationship*" (Jess). Privilege, to Jess, is an 'exclusive stream' where the social currency is different; exchange is not perceived as easy, perpetuating an insular social life.

For Jess racial integration is perceived in the distance, but is not yet a part of her everyday experience: "*As a person, I don't know. Like, I'm not aware, uh, on a day to day level you sort of, to just, uh, I mean to try and integrate myself into the whole of society. Like I know it's my responsibility to try and create my beliefs and schemas around, uh, well the only way to do that would be to expose myself to people that aren't white, that aren't like me, and I know that's what I should do, but I don't really. I'm still very in my own world. I don't know*" (Jess). It is here also perceived as a responsibility of South Africans to 'be a part of the whole country', which is being neglected; she feels she has not moved sufficiently outside of 'her (white and privileged) world'.

Part of the layer which insulates and isolates is perceived as existing within; it is an 'idea' which "*…comes from the way you grow up*" (Emma). Emma explained the 'idea': "*I grew up in a small town where the farmers are around and they are all white and their workers are all coloured. So immediately they work for you. It's that type of thing. That's the thing, right there, that because you are black or coloured that you should be working for me, and not vice versa, and it's that idea that must be changed... For a white person to go and work for a black family, it would be something weird immediately, because of your preconceived ideas you get as a child. And that is what I'm getting at*". The 'idea' within "*must be changed*" for one to participate in a racially integrated South Africa.

4.3.2 Meta-stereotypes of privilege

Meta-stereotypes, a version of meta-perception are explained by Finchilescu (2005) as follows:

> There is, firstly, the feeling of being de-individualized, of having ones personal
> qualities and experiences dismissed, and being subsumed within a large category .
> Further, as part of this category, a variety of negative traits are attributed to oneself
> without opportunity to object or deny their truth. (p. 465)

Research suggests that "…meta-stereotypes may be an influential factor in explaining intergroup anxiety and avoidance of contact" (Finchilescu, 2005, p. 468). In the case of Jocelyn, the experience of privilege as a meta-perception seems to hold very little, if any, negative content and she reveals no indication that it inhibits contact with students outside of her race group. Fiona, however, described feeling as if female coloured students perceive her as a "*rich daddy's girl*". She also described feeling as if it was best if she "*rather just keep quiet*". Certainly this qualifies as a meta-stereotype which inhibits contact. Similarly Jess described meta-perceptions of hostility from coloured girls on the UWC campus.

The association of privilege with an elevated position is perceived as contaminating normal interaction. Privilege is believed to carry with it downward looking and arrogant associations, which are believed to not necessarily be true, but which contribute to racial separateness: "…*there are black people who think that white people are arrogant or that white people look down on them. Maybe they don't know the person well enough*" (Jocelyn). It is the belief that one is perceived as a stereotype, a "*rich daddy's girl*" (Fiona) but, she continues, "…*my dad drove a car which (laughing) (inaudible). They've got no idea but I guess they've got their preconceived ideas that I feel entitled. So I've had that quite often*".

For Fiona the alienation of privilege is experienced in the belief that previously disadvantaged South Africans, with whom she shares common spaces, perceive her as attacking. She described how her criticism of a grammatical error on the overhead was reacted to: "*I just sat there and I started crying afterwards. They were getting so upset, but I had no emotional attachment to what I was saying. But for them because I*

was white and because I said that being white, I was attacking them…if I say something, I can feel their anger. I feel there is a lot of anger…having gone to one of the best schools in the country, my English is perfect, but a lot of the people in the class' English is not perfect because it is not their first language" (Fiona).

The imperfection of the language is what her attention was drawn to and she felt compelled to differentiate 'perfect private school English' and 'imperfect English', an act of self definition, of separation of good from bad English; and it is good with which she identifies, saying, in a sense, 'that bad English on the overhead is what I am not'. Yet she sensed in her classmates' reactions that the distinction made them angry; was not accepted. The use of privilege ('in terms of private school English') to define self-other boundaries is a part of what is believed to alienate one from fellow South Africans. When Fiona perceives other whites whom she accuses of separatism keeping 'non-whites' out of night clubs by means of covert charges and other more subtle messages (this will be more fully described shortly) she thinks it "*sad and awful*". Thus, the act is perceived outwardly, in others, and inwardly, in one's own actions, and the multi-racial space of UWC is experienced as challenging of an ingrained manner of self distinction and expression.

The assumption of one's 'natural role', if that is a position of leadership or power (or way of speaking, as described above by Fiona), is experienced as being resisted by South Africans of other races or cultures; as problematic and as engendering hostile feelings, coming between co-researchers and previously disadvantaged South Africans: "*…if you take charge of the group and you are white, then they think that 'who are you?', 'why do you necessarily need to take charge of the group?'…if we have to present then there always has to be someone to take the lead and I think that in most cases I tend to do that… they feel that because I'm white I'm just taking control which is not the case. But I think that that has been seen to be like that.* (Emma)".

Even one's presence as a white student at UWC, is at times imagined to cause resentment: "*Maybe for them it's like their place, like this is not for whites. Maybe they feel like I'm just invading more of their space, like haven't you taken away enough? Now you have to come to our university?*" (Jess) Previous studies have found

that white South Africans experience desegregated spaces which were historically whites-only as being invaded by black South Africans and they felt displaced by black South Africans (Dixon & Durheim 2003; Dixon & Reicher, 1997; Durheim & Dixon, 2004). Here it can be seen that the desegregated space of UWC, a historically coloured university, is self-consciously worried about as being invaded.

Attending UWC, however, is also perceived as an initiation of a movement outside of one's white world, to a space made a part of one's everyday life which is not within the insulation of one's privileged white world. A space in which, as Blackbeard and Lindegger (2007) noted in the school boys in their study, hegemonic norms are challenged in the 'voluntarily inclusive' spaces on the margins of (mono-racial) establishments. In rather a similar way, co-researchers, like Blackbeard and Lindegger's participants, oscillated between setting this space up as both a repudiated 'outside space' (for example in their beliefs about how their white friends see UWC as a substandard university) as well as a space of potential racial harmony and academic progressiveness, in which one has more freedom for interracial interaction, away from other whites who are resistant to desegregation.

In this way the experience of privilege within a transforming society is comprised of a perceived movement of black South Africans into former white spaces and white South Africans in to former black spaces, about which one is ambivalent: one feels invasive (in historically disadvantaged spaces), invaded upon and unseated (in historically white privileged spaces) as well as supportive of racial integration.

4.3.3 Grades of racial integration

Co-researchers described grades of racial integration, for example being "…*friendly to each other, but not friends*" because "… *people would look at you funny and things like that… The cool groups were usually the ones who stuck with the whites and coloureds completely* (Sophie)", or regarding intimate relationships: "…*my friends will influence that because, uh… because I wouldn't want to offend anyone I would think twice before inviting just anyone into the friendship group…I have done it and …in my group of friends as long as it stays at friendship it's fine, but going into a marriage type relationship would be something else* (Emma)".

Some spaces are willingly shared and inhabited together, while others which one feels justified in restricting access to, on defensible grounds, such as a 'different culture', (Durheim & Dixon, 2005; Hook, 2004) are restricted. Hook (2004), in discussing a "'defensible racism'- a racism that the enlightened 'anti-racist racist' might feel comfortable with" (p. 684), has argued that for these acts to appear convincing, the ideas are necessarily—at least "in some superficial capacity"—'true', "...to either the subject or the social realm in which she or he is placed" (p. 684).

Nowhere was this more evident than in co-researchers experience of the personal space shared within an intimate relationship, whether casually in a night club, or in a committed relationship, and the boundaries around this space which limit access discriminatively. There is a racialized selective permeability to the boundary around one's body which is a space, personal and restricted.

Fiona, for example, professed an anti-racist attitude (much that she described about her everyday life suggests that this has lead to genuine actions which challenge racism), but feels her body invaded by coloured men: "*Well, yes there is, it's a very small thing, but it's not a colour thing, it's a culture thing. So I don't agree with certain aspects of coloureds culture, very lewd. And that gets to me. I mean, sometimes you'll be walking down the street and, oh, but you wouldn't get it, but if I'm walking down the street I get cat whistles, or whatever. I don't know if it's because I'm white, but…I get it a lot and it makes me feel degraded. It makes me feel less than human. It makes me feel like an animal, really*". With white males similar boundaries are crossed, but she does not object to this and it is perceived as different somehow; more civilized and less 'out in the open': "*Well, they'll do whatever they like, they'll hit your ass if they're say, in a club, so they'll do that, but it's just different to doing it out in public. You know? It's not in the middle of the street*".

These two sets of relationships—to white men, on the one hand, and coloured men, on the other—present an important intersection of her life-world and her position within it as a white female. Her body is perceived as being objectified in both relationships and the gendered power grid within which this sense of herself has been perceived cannot be overlooked. However, her body is also one space to which she limits access along racial lines. To be made to feel 'less than human' and 'like an animal'—

although it says many things about her perceptions of gender relations in post-apartheid South Africa—goes against the anti-racist logic of the rest of her rather reflexive description of her experience. Although there are several angles from which to understand this statement, within the context of the rest of her description, this feeling of repulsion is inconsistently felt; not arbitrarily, but racially.

Regarding racist reactions, particularly in individuals who understand themselves as being 'anti-racist', Hook (2004) has written of affective structures "…concerned with a rudimentary attempt to effect a kind of ego-coherence… the desperate urgency of the wish to divide self from the other" (p. 686). This has some resonance with how Fiona described her reactions in these instances. In other words, her responses can be understood as the desire to stand inside of her white social identity where she is 'not animal' and wholeness, security and coherence lie (Sexton, 2003).

While Hook's (2004) notion may aid in understanding the way in which Fiona has perceived coloured males as 'other', which, in effect, keeps 'them' and their sexualized, lewd cat whistles 'outside', her description of her experiences also shows, poignantly, the way in which white female's race/gender positioning privileges, but simultaneously subordinates. In her perceptions of males, both are desiring of her, though coloureds she actively and affectively repudiates, while whites she allows to tap her bottom, arguably a degrading act for 'bad children', even if in the guise of a joke.

Several co-researchers have a racially mixed group of friends and *feel* committed to a racially integrated country and express liberal views, but draw the line at intimate relationships with non-white partners; even when openness to such a relationship was expressed, it was a boundary across which co-researchers imagined moving: "*I think for me it would just be the big, big leap of skipping from friends to being in a relationship with someone of another race...*" (Sophie). This is described with highly defensible (Durrheim & Dixon, 2005; Hook, 2004) references to the importance of common cultural ground and compared to the difficulties people from the same race, but different cultures would experience, such as English and Afrikaans whites: "*No, not really, but not because of the race. I know that there is a fine line between being racist, and not, and I don't see myself as being racist at all. So it's not because of*

race, but because of culture. I mean, for me it would be difficult to adapt to an Afrikaans culture. So it's not because you're white or coloured or whatever, but because of culture which plays a huge role. An example, British English people, they have a different culture to what we have here. It might not be such a huge factor, like say a black, but it would still pose problems. So the ideal would be to go for a culture which is closest to my own" (Emma).

The reasons described for having resistance to a relationship with someone of a different race were frequently the prejudices perceived without, in one's friends: "(they)…*would be very upset, no! they wouldn't be happy*" (Talia), one's family: "*…it's fine if I'm friends with people of a different race, that's ok, and I am, and so are my parents, but if I wanted to ever have a relationship with someone of another race, well, no ways. They wouldn't be happy… my grandmother has always said, and I don't think she means it in a mean way, 'spots and stripes don't mix'. She says we have different cultures and values*" (Nadia), cultural difference, difference in upbringing and lack of common ground. These things make up the boundaries around the intimate space into which no person of a dissimilar race may cross.

Although the role of racial prejudice perceived without, in other's, is believed to bring about the greater effect on racial separateness, those perceived within are acknowledged as playing an efficacious role; in the boundary wall of logical differences and other people's prejudices, one discovers one's own racist thorn bush: "*There's the different economic background, because they live in a different way, they grew up a different way, most of them anyway, completely, compared to us, mostly because of economics… And because of the colour difference, the physical difference to me…I couldn't imagine myself with a black person just because of the colour, I know I sound racist now, but the colour for me is too much of a contrast*" (Sophie).

4.4 Othering other whites: split subjectivities of being privileged as a white English-speaking young adult

4.4.1 'I'm not like them'

Racial stereotypes are perceived as existing within one, but are perceived more frequently and cogently in other white people, out there; the assumptions held within are frequently similar, but are believed to be more moderate, less crude versions

which appear, not in isolation, but with a rationalization, an explanation and accompanied by a process of reflection and an action "…*against the grain*" (Fiona).

These prejudices, particularly about racial segregation, are unlike those perceived in other whites around one, such as friends who went to different (historically white) universities, institutions such as one's old school as well as in social contexts, such as night clubs: "…*they try and keep it white by making a covert charge… They try to keep it white because they don't want the hierarchical standing of their club dropped. It's like them saying that if black people come into their club then it's not a good club anymore. What have we just done, erase the past 10 years or something? I think it's awful…It's quite sad really*" (Fiona). The differentiation occurs here in calling separatism perceived in other whites 'sad' and 'awful'.

The differentiation of one's self from other whites forges an anti-racist aspect to one's identity which is experienced in relation to other (racist) whites. This differentiated aspect of one's identity is far more immediate than the racial assumptions which they too, hold. This bears much resemblance to Blackbeard and Lindegger's (2007) description of their research participants being able to challenge the hegemony of mono-racial discourses in peripheral space; here UWC, in general, is perceived as a space which encourages "counter normative discourses" (p. 40); a space away from mono-racial night clubs, exclusive schools and white friends who are resistant to racial integration.

The forging of an identity, for English-speaking white South Africans, through what one is not—an 'anti-ism' (Sennet & Foster, 1996)—has historically used Afrikaner and African Nationalism as its points of reference. While much comparison to Afrikaans whites is evident, the "a-collectivity" (Salusbury, 2003, p. 36) of English-speaking whites in South Africa is accompanied by an increasingly articulated concept of what English-speaking whites *are*, with which one identifies and from which one differentiates one's self. Certainly a racially integrated environment such as UWC encourages differentiation from other 'racist whites', Afrikaans or English, and this kind of talk can be construed as a necessary tactic in order to fit into one's environment, but it is also a hopeful sign that the way English-speaking whites set up

exclusive spaces in schools, night clubs and friendship groups are at times visible and challenged; that the gaze is, at times, turned onto one's own group and its practices.

4.4.2 Movement away from other racist whites/ movement away from other racist white self

It is not only against other whites and their racist ways that one differentiates one's self -a movement away from these discourses perceived in other whites- but also an identification of racial prejudice within, from which one must move. Racial assumptions are experienced as buoyant ideas, appearing automatically, popping up. The presence of racial assumptions and prejudices are discovered in some corner of oneself, sitting incongruently amongst the other "*non-racist*" attitudes which are more immediate to one. The discovery is uncomfortable, is admitted as "*sounding racist*" (Sophie) or is called "*non-pc*" (Jess) and is apprehended with reason, logic and one's will: "*I catch myself sometimes. Sometimes it's like I catch myself and go 'shut up! No! You're not thinking like that… And I go 'no!' That is not the truth'*" (Fiona). The racist thought is experienced as something to be apprehended, something which one must not think.

Hook (2004) has suggested that "…the project of anti-racism in South Africa may have succeeded more at repressing white racism than at exorcising it altogether" (p. 683). It is fair to say that in the statement "*You're not thinking like that*", there is an acknowledgement of a repressive psychological process and that the racist thought is perceived as 'unacceptable'. This, in a situation of transition such as South Africa is in, may be a necessary phase through which white South Africans must pass, as Billig (1999, pp. 259-260) has stated: "The task for white South Africans, in the creation of a new South Africa, is not merely to keep their mouths shut, but to ensure that they and their children do not think the previously utterable" (in Painter, 2005, p. 80). Painter (2005) does not see Billig's (1999) recommended resolution of "desired repression" (p. 81) as unproblematic, however. And whether what underlies the 'desired repression' is a commitment to social propriety, or social equality, and whether or not racism becomes "socially unpalatable, although nevertheless inwardly permissible" (Hook, 2004, p. 683) is uncertain. The very verbalization of a thought (judged to be racist) can be seen as one which emerges into the horizon of her consciousness, though with an 'unpalatable' quality.

Jocelyn similarly described how she detects "*prejudice*" within herself in her criticism of, and frustration with, beggars: "*There is some prejudice to that because you don't know the reason the* (beggar) *is standing there. That is obviously an issue, but I'm still training my mind... I think when you get to know someone you are not as quick to say that they could have changed their own circumstances*". Prejudice detected within is apprehended by co-researchers through situating the person to whom the prejudiced view is directed within an historical and socio-political context, a kind of 'mind-training' and 'self-policing' or, it is believed by co-researchers, through contact; both approaches described erode prejudice through one form of education, or another (either of the facts of the past, or the 'real' person in the present); it is described as a movement, in one's perception, closer to the 'truth', a new 'truth' about who people around one are.

4.5 Attributing privilege to hard work first and to historical inequality second

The understanding described by co-researchers of the relationship between opportunities they have experienced, hard work, race and history was frequently vague, contradictory and inexact; many co-researchers said they had not previously given much thought as to *why* they experience privilege.

Privilege is perceived by co-researchers as having been generated through hard work, through personal and familial initiative and industriousness. South Africa's political history is seen as having provided greater opportunities to which hard work could be applied, but as a theme, it is hard work, rather than history, which is given the greater weight. History provided a "*...big step above the rest*" (Sophie), but it is work which is believed to have brought about the kind of life which they live: "*I could have been given the opportunity of going to a good school and if I didn't use it, it wouldn't have meant anything...My ability to work and study and actually pass one year after the next is based on work and not on skin colour*" (Jocelyn); "*...I think in my case, where my family got, we worked, it wasn't just given*" (Sophie). This concurs with Salusbury's (2003) findings where she observed an absence of racialized themes in the life history interviews she conducted with white English-speaking South Africans.

In making sense of a persistent disparity in living conditions between people of different races in South Africa most co-researchers experienced an incongruence

which arose from their belief that the privilege they experience has come from hard work. When this line of thinking was applied to those South Africans who live in poverty, the troublesome corollary was that 'they' must then have not worked hard; this, to them, sounded 'racist' and did not fit with their other, non-racist attitudes.

This incongruence was grappled with and resolved (and not resolved) in different ways by co-researchers, most essentially, by a desire expressed by co-researchers to "…*put apartheid behind us and all be equal now*" and to "*give everyone equal rights, equal opportunities, equal everything. And everything would be so much better*" (Nadia). To not notice colour is to put apartheid behind one and 'noticing colour' is equated with apartheid era racism which situated people of different races unequally in relation to one another: "…*when I meet someone and I interact with someone I don't notice if they are black, white or whatever. Yes, if someone asks me I will obviously think twice and say 'oh, it is a coloured person', or 'it's a black person', but when I am working with someone I don't see coloured, or black, flashing in front of me all the time. I am working with the person as a person. I haven't been trained to be racist in that sense, to notice colour as if that is the main issue when you are interacting with people*" (Jocelyn).

This possibility of 'putting it all behind us', so frequently spoken about, seemed to moderate, even nullify, the problems and inconsistencies of believing one is privileged because of hard work, rather than politics. With this possibility, one is not forced to follow the logic of the belief through, to the racist conclusion, that inequality is the fault of the poor.

4.6 Ambivalent about transformation
4.6.1 Perceptions of a shifting social and economic landscape
As previously stated, privilege is experienced relatively. As one co-researcher noted: "(Whites are privileged) …*in some ways, but in some ways not. I mean, black people, coloured people, previously disadvantaged people in South Africa are doing better and better, so maybe we should just drop the whole idea*". A general perception of the present socioeconomic situation in South Africa is that: "…*most of the privileged people are white and most of the disadvantaged people are black*" (Talia), but this is not perceived as being static, rather, the socioeconomic landscape is seen as shifting.

This change is understood as necessary and is supported by co-researchers, but simultaneously evoked negative feelings about transformation.

The extent of the shifting perceived by co-researchers varied from, on the one hand, drastic: "…*you see people on the street and what are they? It's more and more white people starting to beg on the street. It's more and more white people without jobs. 10 years ago that wasn't seen. Like the petrol attendants were always black, now I go to garages and a lot of them are white…like a lot of people who were in squatter camps got into a job, a BEE job, and now they're driving sports cars*" (Corlia). On the other hand, change is perceived as a slow dismantling of the robust structures of white privilege which requires the constant nudging of policy: "*I would love everyone to just be able to apply for a job purely on merit and not on skin colour and history, but it's not equal, well it is, but it's forced equal now. If we did away with all those policies it would very quickly slip back into, uh, well it doesn't even necessarily have to be racial, it would be the people with the best education and the best marks and unfortunately because it's only 10 years, we still pretty much in the same generation, it would slip back into white people getting the jobs*" (Jess).

The perceived socioeconomic trajectory towards equality in South Africa is supported, *and* is felt as something which takes away, or will take away, from whites. It takes away opportunities, a familiar way of doing things, such as worshiping at church, creating resentment, and at its most drastic, a home is taken. At times it is the threat of a loss, an imagined and potential loss, or it is a place within a home country which is felt to be threatened. At other times the loss is literally a home, which signals drastic Zimbabwean possibilities and is likened to apartheid, "*just the reverse*" (Corlia).

This corresponds to Durheim and Dixon's (2004) and Dixon and Durrheim's (2003) findings that whites see blacks as displacing them from valuable spaces such as former whites-only beaches; one's former privileged space feels invaded upon, or threatened. This is a pervasive theme which ran through co-researchers' descriptions, relating to professional space, but also the social space of one's church, the living space of one's home and the private space of one's body, even if not literally and the

invasion is 'their' "*lewd*" thoughts, sexual intentions and cat whistles which objectify one's body.

4.6.2 The vicissitudes of other whites around one signal the worst possibilities: 'it doesn't affect me but…'

There is a common professional confidence described by co-researchers. Transformation may exert some effect on their careers, but this can be overcome through hard work, as was noted by Salusbury (2003). The retributive, discriminative and capricious possibilities of transformation for whites are signalled to co-researchers by the vicissitudes of other whites; a theme of not personally having felt the effects of transformation and of perceiving it as going on at some distance from one's life, but knowing of some or other person who has suffered it's effects: "*I don't know why it hasn't affected me. I think I have just been quite lucky. I'm also incredibly intelligent (laughs). No, I'm kidding. …but there is still that resentment that their marks aren't as good, and there are people I know who work hard and they're trying to get somewhere, but there are places getting filled by people who aren't white... And that's where the resentment, for me, is*" (Jess).

The negative feelings about transformation policy described by co-researchers were varied: "*…resentment…*" (Jess), expressed similarly by Sophie: "*I think that it's a good thing that the government and the people are trying to help…But I also believe that, or feel that, it shouldn't all be given on a silver platter. It should also be worked for. I know that in the apartheid era uh, well it's difficult to get out of that way that it was, but it is possible, now especially, after everything*", fear of loss, fear of an uprising from white extremists groups: "*…we'll have apartheid wars all over again. Full scale wars. And all the innocent people will suffer*" (Nadia) and a utilitarian distrust of the process of appointing people on the basis of race alone because of the "*danger*" of such a process.

Cases of other white South Africans becoming destitute because of transformation and black South Africans beginning to succeed evidence the shifting socioeconomic landscape within which their privilege has been experienced. A history of unequal opportunities is acknowledged, its implications in everyday life perceived (such as parent's jobs, private school education and having one's own transport), but this

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historical aspect of the broader context within which privilege is experienced is juxtaposed with a present, including policy, which slants in favour of those who were previously disadvantaged and a future which shows signs of an "…*apartheid, but reversed*" (Nadia). A privileged position within post-apartheid South Africa is perceived as being in the process of being lost, whether in a situation which has already "*evened out pretty much*" (Emma), has a trajectory towards equality, or in an 'inverted apartheid' and it is 'as if' it is already lost; the privileged past and it's persisting beneficent present overlap a present and future which is perceived as being in flux, as *also* discriminative towards whites.

4.6.3 Unsettling perceptions of inequality

Co-researchers tended to acknowledge a disparity in living conditions between white and black South Africans, but focused more attentively on the strengthening of previously disadvantaged communities and on the successful individuals from historically disadvantaged race groups: "…*when it started it was really run down, but the community is building itself up, the community has built itself up so much since '94. So when I go home I drive through those areas where people are less fortunate than me I also see what I saw 10 years ago. I mean I don't hold any white guilt or any of that. So I see people who were given the bad end of the stick and they are making it better*" (Fiona).

This perceived aspect of black and coloured individuals and communities, the empowered aspect, is threatening as it signals eminent changes, but also, as described above, moderates the perception of disparate living conditions, similarly observed by Collier (2005); the background against which one's privilege is perceived is less bleak, thus keeping at bay the negative feelings that come with perceiving such a disparity. The capacitating function of one's living environment is also out of focus with this view of things. In this way the perception of disparity is acknowledged, but simultaneously a perception of its greater effects is resisted.

Not only is it the greater effects of the disparity in living conditions which is resisted, but the affective fullness of the acknowledgement too (Frankenberg, 1993), is resisted, most clearly described as follows: "*We are so used to it, well, I am so used to it by now, to see it, uh, just being in South Africa because you drive past areas which*

are poor that you get so used to driving past that you don't even see it any more"
(Sophie). A host of feelings are perceived as being evocable, but not within one's
immediate consciousness: "*... I guess you do notice it, you do take note of what is
happening, but I think the emotions of driving past there don't really kick in, you
know, unless you really stop and think about it, but just when you drive past the
emotions aren't really there. You see it, it's not as if you ignore what's going on
around you, but you don't really feel anything for it*" (Sophie).

A feeling which emerged in other co-researchers in similar situations to Sophie's
description above was fear: "*I think their circumstances, their circumstances drive
them to do things they wouldn't normally do... If you're desperate, I think anyone
who is desperate, you will do what it takes to get out of that situation, even if it's not
the right thing to do. I know there are a lot of killings and I just wouldn't feel safe
going into a township on my own...Sometimes it's scary, it depends where you are...I
guess wherever you go you have, uh, well the gangs and they are very rife in the
townships. You just, you read in the paper what goes on and it makes you quite
frightened*" (Corlia). This echo's her fear of something being taken from white people
and shows that underneath this fear lies a perception of a 'lack' experienced by the
racial 'other'; it is the imagined 'lack' of people she does not know, 'out there' in the
townships.

Fiona animatedly described the presence of a feeling of fear in perceiving a black
street person's 'lack', but joked about it, keeping fear, and anger, at bay: "*I mean, this
guy in town, he unlocks his jaw and pulls his teeth out over his lips and pulls this
face! And he says 'sorry, you don't have some money for me do you?', and you say
you don't and he goes, 'hhaaarrr!' (Laughs) And you get such a fright 'cos if you
don't give this guy money he scares the living daylights out of you! It gets a bit much,
you know. When that happens I just try, ah, not get angry and try to be nice about it*".

It was not fear, but a feeling of being "*disturbed*" which Jess felt when the resisted
perception of a beggar's 'human' need came into focus and was clearly seen: "*I saw
this guy a while ago, and you don't want them to come to your window or you don't
want to speak to them, because you don't want to feel sorry for them, because you
don't want to take the responsibility of saying that this person is starving, I'm sitting*

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here, I've got money, but I'm not going to give it to them. If you look at it like that it's very hard to justify. So I'd rather just cut myself off at the beginning as a way of defending myself, otherwise I'll be penniless... I was listening to a song on the radio and this homeless person came up to me and said, 'oh, (musician's name inaudible)*, and I was like, you don't know this stuff and you're not part of my world! And it was the most bizarre, you know, he just crossed that boundary into knowing what I know which is very strange for me because we had a conversation and by the end of it I felt quite disturbed. I don't like to believe that they actually have a personality, or knowledge, or hurt, you know, they're humans underneath it all.*"

Drawing on Butler (1993), Hook (2004) has described the social importance of the notion of abjection in its designation of "'uninhabitable' and 'unliveable' zones of social life—zones populated by those who do not qualify as full subjects of that particular social order—whose function is to circumscribe the domain of those who do qualify as full subjects" (p. 689). In the abovementioned description of a scenario experienced by Jess, she said, to repeat: "*you don't know this stuff and you're not part of my world!*" By the street person having knowledge of, and interest in, 'her' music, the boundary between 'I' and 'not-I', in terms of a social identity which ensures occupation of the 'domain of full subjects' as well as an 'outside' where those who do not qualify are situated, becomes blurred and is felt as being unsettled.

4.7 Perceived role in South Africa as privileged English-speaking whites

Integration is understood as necessary on a functional level, but is also experienced as enriching. Here one co-researcher expresses a desire for merit to be the primary criteria, an acknowledgement of the necessity of transformation and the value of integration: "…*And how are you going to learn about another culture? And I think that the biggest problem in South Africa is that we don't understand one another; they don't understand us and we don't understand them. If you do it that way you're going to get thrown into it and you going to learn. …Learn about each other. Maybe whites learn, and same for the blacks. If they learn about us and we learn about them, maybe we'll be able to get on*" (Corlia).

The role of young white South Africans is believed, as described above, to be a part of the country, to integrate oneself and not remain within the confines of one's 'white

world': "*I think generally, the younger generation has a role in it in terms of being friends with people of different races …Just being more open, you know, open minded and uh, it think its best just to be yourself and um, be educated about what was in the past*" (Sophie) and there is an eschewing of the separatism perceived in 'other' young white South Africans, for example, those who want to go to clubs where there are only white people. The older generation is perceived as more entrenched in their racist attitudes, but still should be shown that "…*we don't have to be separate, we can work together and don't need to separate ourselves according to race*" (Nadia).

Professionally, most co-researchers expressed a commitment to equality in South Africa and to contributing in some way to that end: "… *I want to try and find ways that you can give to people, uh, mentally, to help them to get on the right path without having to change factors which aren't actually changeable, like finance and poverty, at the moment… Try and sort of get them on the right path*" (Jess). The strategic import of viewing economic equality as being 'not possible' should be pointed out, but this does also refer to how Jess sees overwhelming discrepancies in how people of different races live in South Africa and a commitment to being a part of the process of changing this.
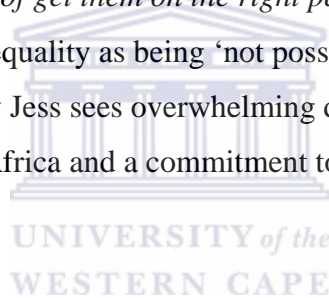
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Integration of findings

5.1.1 Introduction

As privilege, by definition, is the 'enjoyment of special rights or immunities', a phenomenological approach to studying the *lived experience* of privilege has drawn attention to the ways in which the 'special rights and immunities' of being a white English-speaking young adult have been experienced within the everyday contexts of post-apartheid South Africa. As this study has explored perceptions of privilege, findings describe the experience of privilege both in its spatial appearances—the boundaries enclosing that space and the regulation of those boundaries—as well as presences of privilege which were more psychological. Privilege has been experienced by co-researchers in various spaces of post-apartheid South Africa, not as something static, but as an unfolding and transforming phenomenon, as something which is challenged and defended, differently, in those different spaces.

Being situated within a post-apartheid context, this study has also focussed attention on how the challenge posed to white privilege by transformation processes have been perceived and how these challenges, particularly desegregation, have been experienced in everyday life. Findings from this study which relate to lived experience within historically more disadvantaged desegregated space are particularly relevant to understanding the lived experience of transformation processes. In terms of racial representation, these kinds of spaces might be seen as microcosms of South Africa and the way in which a person inhabits the spaces of everyday life and describes lived experience, in terms of spatiality within friendship circles, lecture rooms, cafeterias or a university registration queue, has some relationship to, and correlation with, the place a person feels they have in a country: to staying, leaving, feeling at home or feeling alien, feeling secure and insulated, and feeling insulated and isolated.

5.1.2 Perceived trajectories of white privilege

The emergent, or 'transforming' aspect of the phenomenon of privilege, as it has been experienced by co-researchers, entailed a perception of movement, in a national context, towards equality; equality is on the horizon and is impending. The

implications of this perception were, firstly, that a position of privilege is felt to be defensible as white privilege is understood to be in the process of being lost, or relinquished and, secondly (and simultaneously), it has strengthened the desire to tighten boundaries around privileged spaces. This, as it was described by co-researchers, is the tension of being privileged as a white English-speaking young adult in the context of post-apartheid South Africa: transformation is supported and is resisted; is feared and is, in limited ways, participated in. This, as a theme of co-researchers experience, was the perception of the future of the privilege which other whites experience, as well as the privilege which they themselves experience.

5.1.3 Privilege and psychological transformation

As noted in chapter one, Durrheim (2005) has proposed that in the socio-political context of post-apartheid South Africa, psychological transformation is predicated upon the transformation of "spatial practices and of the spaces themselves" (p. 457), particularly, Durrheim (2005) has argued, the transformation of historically disadvantaged "spaces of (racial) degradation" (p. 457). By creating "new spaces of desire" (Durrheim, 2005, p. 457), "new, reverse, patterns of racial movement" (p. 457) are brought about, as is desegregation; in other words, spatial equality.

It is clear that simple desegregation does not lead to racial harmony. Within the context of UWC, experiences of *being* privileged have been accompanied by a sense of alienation and separation from previously disadvantaged students with whom the university is attended and from the university itself; a sense of 'not belonging' which entails feeling, in relation to others within that space, overpowering, imperial, imposing and abrasive in one's movements and expression and definition of oneself; unintentionally, though 'naturally'.

This may relate to what Sparks (2003) has referred to as English-speaking white South Africans' "…assumed cultural superiority" (P. 6). As Salusbury (2003) too, has argued in the conclusion to her study, white English-speaking South Africans, if they are ever to be comfortable with their place in post-apartheid South Africa, "…will need to acknowledge that they are not necessary as social leaders; that other South Africans manage very well without their advice and guidance…" (p. 125).

Similarly, Gordimer (1989) prophetically wrote of the future of whites in a South Africa where the demise of white domination was inevitable that

> Since skills, technical and intellectual, can be bought in markets other than those of the vanquished white power, although they are important as a commodity ready to hand, they do not constitute a claim on the future. That claim rests on something else: how to offer one's self.

Co-researchers descriptions suggest that an 'offer of one's self' as the leader, or as an authoritative or ethical voice, within a racially integrated group context is experienced as being resisted, angrily at times. A tension is felt as this is experienced as a natural role, but one's natural role, it becomes apparent, is unwanted; is picked out for being marginalizing, or arrogant. White English-speaking young adults, are, in many ways, still learning to relate equally and are, as one co-researcher put it, trying to dispense with "*the idea that whites are higher*" (Emma).

Meta-perception, in other words, the beliefs a person holds about how people outside of their group perceive them (Finchilescu, 2005), seem to contribute towards this sense of alienation and separation. The experience of meta-perception seems particularly relevant to how co-researchers believe others perceive their acts of self expression and definition, especially where those acts are related to being privileged as a white person, but have come to be experienced as normal, or natural to one.

That co-researchers' fantasies and meta-perceptions contain some uncomfortable feelings should not be disheartening. True transformation, it has been argued, requires challenge, disturbance and a degree of dissent, lest the shifts in relations be reduced to everyone "wearing the same have-a-nice-day smile" (hooks, 1999, p. 238). Meta-perceptions of this kind relate strongly to what Frankenberg (1997, p. 26) has referred to as "whites gazing at blacks gazing at whites". As a part of a broad transformation process, this is a significant step because, as hooks (1999) has pointed out, the denial of a subject position of racial others by whites serves to reinforce white dominance and white invincibility. In other words, there have been hopeful, though uncomfortable instances experienced where not only have co-researchers realized that they are privileged, they have realized that 'they' realize too; it is in these instances

that privilege is most unstable and in which new forms of relatedness might be developed.

Particularly relevant to this study are the potential ways in which the creation of 'new spaces of desire', with resultant 'new patterns of racial movement', are able to transform perceptions of relationships between people of different races. In this sense, what Durrheim (2005) has advocated about psychological transformation might be elaborated upon and extended, particularly at the level of lived experience in post-apartheid South Africa: 'new patterns of racial movement' may not only relate to spatial equality, but to a lived sense of racial equality and diminishing white privilege, to a temporal 'space' where *what* is privileged as being 'desirable' is not strictly 'white'. In other words, to a more calibrated economy of 'cool', altering perceptions of *where*, and *what*, it is 'desirable' to be. Certainly there is much evidence to suggest that this is occurring in spaces such as that of UWC and the experience of being at UWC has been described as a positive experience, of a new and interesting kind, where co-researchers have experienced being freer than in traditionally white spaces, and as a space in which one is able to challenge forms of relatedness which have accompanied a privileged sense of self.
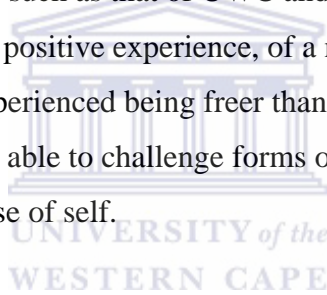
5.1.4 Privilege experienced within historically white space

Much of the experience described by co-researchers overlaps, in terms of context, with what researchers who have focused on the 'micro-ecology of race relations' have analyzed, i.e. privileged spaces historically the exclusive reserve of white South Africans: suburban night clubs, beaches, private Doctors' waiting rooms, churches, schools, suburban neighbourhoods and, in a sense, one's body, an intimate and restricted space. Findings regarding experience within this type of space concur with those of recent social psychology research (Dixon & Durrheim, 2003; Durrheim & Dixon, 2004): whites perceive blacks as pushing them out, as invading and taking away those spaces, or at least taking away a familiar way of being within those spaces.

Co-researchers described a selective permeability to the spaces they had come feel at home in as white South Africans. Included here is also the intimate space within a relationship and the symbolic boundaries which regulate the space of the body. In

instances where it was not only the intrusion of sexual advances from coloured men, but also racialized boundaries which were perceived, co-researchers described feeling as if they were 'sounding racist', or being 'un-pc'. However, findings in this regard relate too, to what Frankenberg (1997) has described as white females' "ambivalent and ambiguous race/gender positioning" which privileges white women, but not unconditionally so. As one co-researcher explained, 'lewd cat whistles' from coloured men make her feel objectified, less than human, but white males are permitted to tap her bottom. It speaks of the 'othering' of coloured men, of keeping them outside of exclusive bodily and temporal intimate space, but also of the normalization of subordinating bottom tapping at the hands of white males.

While co-researchers, in many ways, described participating in the setting up and maintenance of symbolic boundaries around those spaces, or being complicit in boundary regulation, there was a prominent theme in their descriptions of challenging those practices which support segregation, more frequently and cogently perceived in other white people around them, but also *within* themselves, including the ways in which these practices have been participated in. The transformative potential of this type of experience has been the thesis of much psychoanalytic research on racism, where the objective is an integration of, or encounter with, 'other' (van Wyk, 2004), which includes the acknowledgement and integration of group experiences which "…relate to the impact of marginalization, power dynamics and ideological differences" (Feldman, 2004).

Findings from this study suggest that, in limited but important ways, this process is occurring. Findings suggest that the integration of 'other', as it relates to the experience of being privileged in relation to others, occurs through perceptions of how one lives and how others live. However, these perceptions appear only in moments of reflection, or when disparity is glaring and frequently how to react to that perception is uncertain, including what is expected of white English-speaking young adults in post-apartheid South Africa.

5.2 Contribution of the study

Desegregation of the abovementioned kinds of spaces constitute a significant portion of the social transformation necessary in South Africa and findings contribute towards

understanding how this challenge to white privilege is experienced by white English speaking young adults. In this sense, the study makes a contribution to the understanding of some of the psychological dimensions of inequality experienced from a position of advantage and thus, also of the lived experience of transformation by white English-speaking young adults.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Findings in a phenomenological study are essences of a phenomenon, in the case of this phenomenological study, of privilege. However, findings should not be read without reference to *what* privilege was to co-researchers. As such, a definition of privilege cannot be superimposed onto findings, nor can findings be transported to a significantly dissimilar political, social and economic context. Findings have to be read critically and with an appreciation of the circumscribed context in which they emerged

The fact that all co-researchers were female limits, or narrows, the way in which results should be read and understood. While there is little arguing with the notion that the 'real' beneficiaries of white privilege, in South Africa and internationally, have been white males, the experience of white females is a socially relevant aspect of post-apartheid life on which to focus academic attention, particularly because of the 'ambiguous and ambivalent race/gender position' (Frankenberg, 1993, 1997) women occupy in society. In this sense, this limitation has narrowed the focus of this study to the experience of female white English-speaking young adults who perceive themselves as being privileged, in one way or another, and, have lived out those experiences of privilege within a society where gender inequality too, exists.

A further limitation of this study is that co-researchers frequently presented highly psychologised descriptions of their experience. While at times this may have provided a conceptual structure for co-researchers to explore their feelings, thoughts and judgments, more rich and meaningful experience was frequently contained in lay descriptions of everyday experience. Selection of co-researchers from other disciplines in different faculties may have produced more informative personal experiences. This may also have increased the likelihood of being able to interview male co-researchers.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

In the context of a country in transformation, the perception of a redundant sense of self-in-relation-to-other, however unsettling, can certainly be seen as a constructive process which presents opportunity for dialogue and negotiation of new forms of relatedness. However, if the process is not contained, the findings suggest, no shifts can be expected. A withdrawal, perhaps not literally, but in terms of a person's emotional presence can be expected. Tension can be expected, as can defensiveness and feelings of being misunderstood. The following except from Fiona's interview illustrates this point exactly: "*I'd never noticed it. Until (a coloured friend) said, 'you're just 3 white people'. And? I'm not with them because they're white. I'm with them because they do the same subjects as me and we've just become friends. So if I react to people, to that anger that I can just feel, you know, I just rather be quiet and I've got my own psychologist and go there and go "boo-hoo-hoo-hoo, that's horrible! (laughs)*" .

A question which the study has not answered and which is a possible future area of research, is if this "*idea*", as Emma called it, is acknowledged and thus acknowledged too as the position in relation to previously disadvantaged South Africans from which one must move, *what* and *where*, psychologically speaking, white English-speaking young adults must move *to* seems unclear to the youth, or at least to co-researchers. The obvious answer to the above question is: to a position of equality where races are resituated in relation to one another (Frankenberg, 1997). Political structures certainly support this sort of psychological transformation, but social, familial and cultural structures within historically white spaces have not been experienced as supportive of this sort of psychological transformation. Parents and the "*older generation*" are those whom must be shown that "*we don't have to be separate*".

This certainly opens up areas for invaluable qualitative research to be conducted on *who*, and *what*, young white English-speaking South Africans (and all South Africans) are identified with in figuring out how to 'offer themselves' in a post-apartheid context, and how that identification works. This is the first equal generation and in many ways the way forward has to be forged alone, without a prototype on which to base a sense of self equal-in-relation-to-other (in order for 'other' to be something other-than-race), yet this is potentially uniting as a generation of multi-

racial South Africans. As van Wyk (2004) has proposed, equality, in terms of subject-positions in relation to one another, may be possible through "…a shared struggle to…decolonise our inherited and socialised models of subjectivity" (pp. 92-93). The challenge of this is in translating the rhetoric of equality into lived experiences of equality in everyday life.

5.5 Recommendations

While research and writing aids in understanding the process of psychological transformation—how it might be usefully facilitated and how it has been subjectively experienced—this cannot remain an academic exercise. If it is a theme of co-researchers experience that, at times, they felt unwanted in historically disadvantaged spaces, imagining hostile feelings directed at them, that 'structure of experience' certainly holds true in relation to other 'historically disadvantaged' spaces such as townships. Most co-researchers had not ever been into a township and they were imagined to be frightfully dangerous places. The felt relationship to those areas and the people who live in them was one of distance and of fear. Although shifts are evident, white space is still perceived as the valuable, safe, desirable 'centre'.

What is most concerning about the findings is the surprise that co-researchers described in discovering positive qualities in people of races different to their own and in areas outside of their 'white world'. What is recommended is the creation of opportunities for experiences which facilitate a 'knowing' of each other, for the knowing of each other's "*humanness*" (Jess) as fellow South African citizens. In this regard, community project involvement for school learners and university students is one way in which it is possible to facilitate a felt identification with other 'centres' of South African life. The danger in recommending community work as a way of knowing each other, is that the 'knowing' may be characterised by a paternalistic spirit of benevolent superiority, helping and directing; this is not the point (Salusbury, 2003; Sparks, 2003). Nor should it be a whitening of 'black' space, but by literally decentring historically white space, relationships of equality are more possible. What is recommended, for whites, is community involvement in the spirit of participation.

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Appendix A

Biographical information form

UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa, Telephone: (021) 959-2283/2453
Fax: (021) 959-3515 Telex: 52 6661

Sex ……………………………………….

Age ……………………………………….

Year of study: 1st year   [….]

            : 2nd year   [….]

            : 3rd year   [….]

            : Post grad [….]

Degree ………………………………………

Type of school attended: Government [….]

                     : Private   [….]

                     : Model C   [….]

                     : Other   [….]

Residential area: ………………………………………………………………

Mode of Transport: ………………………………………………………………

Parent's occupation …………………………………………………………...

Do you live with your parents at their home, or by yourself? ………………………..

If you live by yourself, who funds your place of living? ...…………………………...

Part-time work: …………………………………………………………………….

Appendix B

Informed consent form

UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

Private Bag X 17, Bellville 7535, South Africa, Telephone: (021) 959-2283/2453
Fax: (021) 959-3515 Telex: 52 6661

I, ………………………………………………, agree to participate in this study of 'The lived experience of privilege as experienced by white English-speaking young adults in post-apartheid South Africa' as an interviewee. I am aware that the interviews will cover the following areas of my everyday lived experience: the meaning of (white) privilege, family/home experience, the experience of being white in South Africa and the experience of being white at the University of the Western Cape.

I understand that participation is voluntary and that, should I wish to, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that information shared during the course of the interview will be treated with the utmost ethical consideration and that a pseudonym will be used to protect my identity. A tape recording of the interview will be made available to me on completion of the study, alternatively, the recording will be destroyed once the final report of the study has been written up.

I understand that interviews will take between 1 ½ to 2 hours and will be conducted at the University of the Western Cape, although, as stated above, I am free to discontinue my participation at any time. I acknowledge too, that should I feel it is required, counseling is available to me through the University of the Western Cape's Centre for Student Counseling.

I accept the above stated conditions.

Signed ……………………………………

Date …………………………………….