



An investigation into student perceptions on higher
education transformation at the North-West
University, Potchefstroom campus

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DECLARATION

I, Xolani Wamkelwe Mcwabeni,

declare that the study, titled

An investigation into the perceptions on higher education transformation at the
North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus,

is solely my academic work. All academic resources utilised in the study have been duly acknowledged through proper referencing and this work has not been submitted elsewhere for the awarding of the degree.



Signature X.W. Mcwabeni

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The journey to submission of this Master dissertation was filled with what I can only refer to as God's plans and my willingness to honour and accept them. The challenges presented during this time were stressful, depressing and almost debilitating. This journey needed the kind of strength I cannot fathom nor realise without the support and encouragement of the following individuals.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, PC. This involved an understanding of the perceptions of students on transformations in the student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning at the NWU. There exists a lack of scholarly research on the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU. A lack of qualitatively and context driven definitions and conceptualisations of transformation in higher education, particularly at the NWU, PC was also identified.

The perceptions were analysed through the interpretation of interpretivist and structuralist perspectives in sociology. This approach necessitated the application of the three spheres of transformation, namely, the personal sphere, the political sphere and the practical sphere. With this model, the personal sphere adopted the five nested levels of consciousness, to assess the nature of perceptions on transformation. In this study, the practical sphere was specifically studied. This consisted of the student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning of the university. The findings were also interpreted through Bourdieu's theoretical tools. The results of this analysis was that: 1) race is still a critical component in the difference of perceptions of student life and institutional culture satisfaction; 2) Socio-economic status and geographical location influence perceptions of transformation, as indicated in the narratives in the qualitative analysis; 3) the dynamics of the perceptions of transformation at the NWU are still embedded in the levels of capital (cultural, social, economic and political) inherited, the possibility of acquitting capital and the power to practice and use said capital.

The study chose a mixed-method research approach as appropriate research methodology, to investigate perceptions of transformation. An explanatory sequential mixed method design was used, enabling the chronological occurrence of a cross-sectional design and then a case study design. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were therefore followed. This practice was preferred, due to the importance of understanding from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives, the perceptions of transformation. The survey consisted of 240 structured interviews for the quantitative phase at the PC. This data was then analysed using SPSS to investigate the students' perceptions of transformation in the quantitative phase of the

study. For the case study design, 16 interviews (7 SRC members and 9 SCC members), as well as 3 focus groups at the PC, MC and VC were conducted. The data obtained was sorted into defined categories and through analysis, the perceptions of SRC/SCC members on transformation issues were established.

Keywords: transformation, perception, North-West University, Potchefstroom campus, higher education, student life, institutional culture, teaching and learning, mixed methods, meaning, constructionism.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CHE	Council of Higher Education
EE	Employment Equity
MC	Mahikeng campus
NCHE	National Conference of Higher Education
NWU	North-West University
PC	Potchefstroom campus
PUCHE	Potchefstroom University of Christian Higher Education
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNW	University of the North-West
UNIBO	University of Bophuthatswana
VC	Vaal campus
VC	Vice Chancellor

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This study investigated the perceptions of students at the North-West University concerning the transformation in higher education at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus specifically. The institutional definition of transformation at the NWU refers to an “urgent and well-managed process of fundamental and sustainable change to address inequality by empowering people through education and implementation of expertise in the context of South African higher education” (Pretorius, 2017:258). The definition offered by the NWU is argued as essential to positioning transformation in this study, additionally, it suggests that the essential contribution of this study is to latently investigate the involvement, or lack thereof, of students’ views in this managed process of transformation and how to understand their perspectives on this matter.

In lexical terms, transformation is generally defined as a complete or thorough change in the form, shape, appearance, nature, structure, use or character of something (Cambridge Dictionary (2021), Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2021)). However, it can be inferred from the Collins (2021) dictionary that transformation in South Africa is geared towards building national unity and promoting reconciliation and non-racialism. It can be described as a managed process to completely change the functioning of South African institutions and practices, to address the injustices of the past and accomplish a just and unified society. The NWU definition on transformation is aligned with this national agenda of transformation, however, this study represents the continuation of the national agenda through the academic (higher education) conversation of transformation at the NWU.

To research transformation at the institution, managed dimensions like institutional culture, teaching and learning, as well as student life, were used as a measure of the field. Students are important role players in the transformation of higher education institutions and therefore it was important to determine their perceptions on this managed process, since they are directly affected by it. Their perceptions gave an indication of their understanding and involvement in the change processes of institutions of higher learning belonging to the societies of South Africa, particularly the NWU Potchefstroom campus. The students at the NWU brought to the study their embodied dispositions, cultures and

histories, which vary greatly. Therefore, the study investigated the perceptions of transformation and how students perceive the management thereof at the NWU.

Higher education institutions in post-apartheid South Africa have been encouraged, by government, to transform, through using the framework outlined in the Department of Education's White Paper 3, which emphasises transformation of the higher education systems, which is embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Seepe, 2017: 122). Transformation in higher education in South Africa seeks to establish academic institutions that are non-racial, autonomous and supportive to the democratic environment, thereby addressing the injustices of the past. These entail a framework of transformation which prioritises efficient and equal opportunity in learning by all races and genders. Additionally, it embraces equity of all forms of knowledge in academia, in terms of creating a contextual or hybrid bridging of colonial knowledge with African knowledge systems. This comprises epistemic freedom (Seabi, *et al.*, 2012; Kori, 2016; Waghid, 2002).

In 2004, higher education in South Africa was transformed by the merging of universities. As part of the process, the NWU was formed through the merging of the PU for CHE (Potchefstroom campus), UNW (the Mahikeng campus) and the Sebokeng Vista Campus (which was closed). This initiated a transformation of the PU for CHE, Potchefstroom (Pretorius, 2017; Prinsloo, 2016). This transformation was overseen by the then Vice Chancellor (VC), Dr. Theuns Eloff (2004-2014) of the NWU. In this period, the three campuses were established as separate business and academic units. Dr. Eloff's successor, Professor Dan Kgwadi, who was appointed after the resignation of Dr Eloff in April of 2014, introduced a second transformation phase for the NWU, by merging the campuses into one business and academic unit in 2016 (Pretorius, 2017). His mandate was to integrate the NWU into an academic, managerial and social unit.

Consequently, it became meaningful to investigate the perceptions of students on the outcomes of these transformations. As students are essential for the functioning of the institution, it can be argued that engaging students on their perspectives on transformation can benefit the core business of institutions positively. It is important that the students can give feedback on the process of transforming inherited inequalities and experiences from the past and their influences in the present (Seepe, 2017:123).

What made the NWU an interesting case study in this regard is that the former apartheid campus (Potchefstroom campus), which was a White campus, merged with the University of North-West (Mahikeng campus) which was a Black campus. The historical, cultural and ideological principles on all campuses presented major challenges in both merger processes and thus required innovative solutions. Therefore, managing transformation at the NWU was largely a diversity project, to find consensus on transformation issues due to its different linkages to the past and constitutive elements of the NWU (Pretorius, 2017:252).

The NWU, like most universities in South Africa, employed democratic ideals to support the idea of transformation in higher education, based on the framework led by the constitution. This meant that transformation disturbed past ideologies of disintegration. In so saying, transformation in the unique society of South Africa must be conducted, interpreted and explained, considering the historical, structural and social environment of South Africa (Candlin, 1991:vi-vii). Due to this, it is important to engage the perceptions of students and understand how they, from diverse backgrounds, see their place in the transformation processes of the NWU.

As mentioned above, transformation at the NWU is defined as an “urgent and well-managed process of fundamental and sustainable change to address inequalities by empowering people through education and the implementation of expertise in the context of South African higher education” (Pretorius, 2017:258). This definition addresses the above-mentioned framework for access, success, quality, equity, redress, diversity, student experience, increased unity, resource allocation and alignment. As a result, this study accepts this definition as its working concept of transformation, however, it is open to the fact that student perceptions may deviate from this definition.

1.2. Problem statement

Knowledge on the nuanced understandings and assumptions of higher education transformation by students at higher education institutions is limited (Schneidewind & Augenstein, 2016:88). Furthermore, studies about NWU students’ understanding of transformation and what their perceptions of transformation are, in view of the #FeesMustFall movement and #RhodesMustFall movement, are limited. This does not imply that research has not been done on transformation at the NWU on the decade after

the merger (Kamsteeg, 2014,2017; Prinsloo 2016; Pretorius, 2017; Howlett *et al.*, 2016). Specifically, Prinsloo (2016) and Pretorius (2017) have described the processes of the structural transformation of the NWU in detail. However, the studies did not focus on the perspectives of students.

It is noted that in the NWU's managed process of transformation, the involvement of students is lacking (Prinsloo, 2016:282). The focus of transformation communication at the NWU has been on the corporate and public relations sides. Since 2009, the annual reports of the NWU showcased profits, staff performance and increases in research, teaching and learning, compliance with the national and international standards of merging universities and realising the set growth targets of the university (Prinsloo, 2016). The NWU, as a result, is painted as an award-winning, well-managed university with an emphasis on diversity, which hides inequalities and racist undertones in the university, says Dr Ingrid Tufvesson, the former transformation officer at the NWU (Prinsloo, 2016:264). This was evident in the lack of cohesion among students at the NWU who came from backgrounds characterised by socio-economic and socio-political inequalities. This was exacerbated by cultural insensitive incidents or culturally specific practices at the NWU (Prinsloo, 2016:319; 329). At the NWU, Potchefstroom campus especially, Black students experienced a significant difference between their home environment and the culture of the campus (Thaver, 2006:17).

Furthermore, being taught in Afrikaans can be considered excluding students who are Black or who are English, although the history and culture of the NWU, Potchefstroom campus, is as an Afrikaans campus. Therefore, the democratic values which require dramatic changes to institutional life could be considered as alienating Afrikaans students through the transformation process. This occurs in spite of the fact that Afrikaans symbolises a difficult time in South Africa, with regards to its alienating and dehumanising policies. Thus, its dominant use at the Potchefstroom campus, which is formerly known as the PU for CHE, which endorsed apartheid, is seen as a perpetuated pre-merger culture at the campus. This cultural exclusivity of the campus is also visible in the names of the buildings and the relationship of these names with the apartheid regime (Kamsteeg & Wels, 2011:31). This creates insecurity and disaffection among Black students, due to feelings of exclusion (Kamsteeg & Wels, 2011:31). To overcome this, the NWU, along

with the Ministerial team, acknowledged in 2014 that the Potchefstroom campus needs to encourage a more inclusive culture (Prinsloo, 2016:343).

The social and political doxa (experience, knowledge and ideology) of a university field can be exclusive and thus creates the social dramas mentioned above. This could impede students from full participation in the academic environment of the campus. To fully understand this, it is important to study students' perceptions and interpretations of transformation at the campus. The lack of studies in this regard can be viewed as a weakness of the transformation project at the NWU. The research problem, therefore, is that there is limited in-depth research available into students' perceptions of transformation with regards to the NWU, particularly at the Potchefstroom campus, since 2004. This implies that student perceptions have not been considered in the transformation processes. This study wants to assist in rectifying this gap.

1.3. Research questions

Against the background provided, the following general and specific research questions and objectives were formulated, with the aim of investigating the perceptions of NWU students on transformation.

The principal question of this study was: What are the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus?

The specific research questions are as follows:

- What can be understood as higher education transformation in the context of South Africa and specifically at the NWU?
- What is the applicable methodology used to study transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus?
- How is mixed-methods methodology applicable to collect information on student perceptions on higher education transformation at the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus to transformation?

- What conclusions and recommendations can be drawn based on the findings on the perceptions of NWU students on academic transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus?

1.4. Research objectives

The main objective of the study is as follows: To investigate the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

The specific research objectives were as follows:

- To inquire, from literature, the nature of transformation in higher education in South Africa and at the NWU.
- To investigate applicable methodology that can be used to study the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.
- To investigate mixed-methods as an applicable methodology that can be used to study the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus
- To make conclusions and provide possible recommendations that can be drawn based on the findings on the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

1.5. Central theoretical statement

This section introduces a central theoretical framework for the interpretation of the perceptions on transformation in higher education institutions. This is done by identifying dimensions by which transformation can be measured within a setting. This model is suggested by this study as useful to investigate and understand the perceptions of students on transformation in higher education and specifically at the NWU Potchefstroom campus.

The five nested levels of social consciousness by Schlitz et al., (2010:19), define transformation as a fundamental shift in perspectives of worldviews, which result in long-

lasting changes in people's sense of self. This model argues that transformation of worldviews permeates to fundamental changes in the epistemological behaviours of individuals and their understanding of themselves on an ontological level. This model is useful since it highlights how the development of social consciousness corresponds to a series of transformations in worldviews (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:22). Furthermore, the three spheres model of transformation by O'Brien and Sygna (2013) defines transformation as a complex process that entails changes at a personal, political and practical sphere. This model assists in covering the breadth and depth of the experience of transformation. Through combining the models by Schlitz *et al.*, (2010) and O'Brien and Sygna (2013) and applying it to the higher education focus on transformations in institutional culture, teaching and learning, and student life, a framework is created to comprehensively measure and interpret the students' perceptions in this regard.

1.5.1. The Five Nested Levels of Social Consciousness model

The Five Nested Levels of Consciousness model assists this research in dealing with different levels of consciousness students may have regarding the transformation processes. Transformations in worldviews in this model comprises of five levels of social consciousness. Firstly, the embedded level of social consciousness refers to consciousness, which is shaped through one's awareness of the social, cultural, economic and political influences, which is to an extent considered as they pre-social consciousness (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:22). Secondly, the self-reflective level of social consciousness is where individuals "gain awareness of how their experiences are conditioned by the social world of which they live through reflection and contemplative practices" (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:22).

Thirdly, the engaged level of social consciousness is where people are aware of how they are influenced by the social environment (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:22). Furthermore, it is at this level of consciousness that people express an intention to contribute "to the greater good in some outwardly directed way" (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:22).

Fourthly, in the collaborative level of consciousness "people see themselves as part of a collective and begin to work with others to co-create or shape the social environment through collaboration" (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:23). Lastly, the resonant social consciousness is where people have a "sense of essential inter-relatedness with others". This means

that there is “a field of shared experiences and emergence that is felt and expressed in social groups, institutions which therefore stimulates social transformation” (Schlitz *et al.*, 2010:23). These levels are important to gauge students’ awareness of transformation in a process of measuring their perceptions. Students’ measure of social consciousness and how it relates to transformation must be an important aspect of a study like this.

1.6. Core transformational spheres at the NWU

The Three Spheres of Transformation model provides useful distinctions between the social spheres in which transformation is understood and controlled. According to O’Brien and Sygna (2013), this model distinguishes between three spheres. The first is the personal sphere, as discussed in the previous section. The personal sphere is where transformation is realised through consciousness and the socialisation of consciousness (O’Brien and Sygna, 2013:4). The personal sphere reforms consciousness in “the individuals’ collective beliefs, values, and worldviews in how the systems and structure are viewed, and how they influence what types of solutions are considered “possible””. In this way, the importance of this sphere in this study is seen whether one can consciously perceive themselves as belonging to the bigger community of the NWU and its unitary vision.

Secondly, the political sphere, is the systems and structures that provide the conditions for transformations in the practical sphere (O’Brien & Sygna, 2013:5). Thirdly, the practical sphere, which refers to the following subsections: behavioural changes, innovations, institutional and managerial practices in ensuring transformation (O’Brien & Sygna, 2013:5). These spheres assist this research to distinguish between perceptions about transformation that relates to the practical, political and personal aspects of transformation, which forms an integrated whole. In this research, the perceptions of students on transformation will therefore be studied, in view of their cognisance thereof and their interpretation of the spheres thereof. But this research focusses on higher education transformation and thereof will focus on the core aspects of the managed process of this type of transformation, namely institutional culture, teaching and learning and student life.

1.6.1. Institutional culture

According to Toma *et al.*, (2005:1-6), institutional culture is defined as institutional norms, values and beliefs. It is through an institutional culture that a degree of one-ness is created. This could be seen in the language spoken, the narratives shared within the institution, the symbols in the institution as well as the actions or practices needed to create a common understanding, for instance orientation in residencies or to the institution itself.

Over the past decades, institutional culture has changed to improve management and governance of institutions; therefore, decision-making has become defined more by collaborative structures and as a power symbol of staff and government (Tierney & Lanford, 2018:2). The objective of such measures within institutions is to cultivate innovative ideas that inform transformation by encouraging diversity, integration and autonomy. A deeper understanding of the relationship between culture and transformation is important (Tierney & Lanford, 2018:3). This is especially true regards to transformation in higher education institutions.

In engaging a phenomenon like cultural transformation at higher education institutions in South Africa and the NWU, Potchefstroom campus, it is wise to not ignore the relationship between the institution as a habitus for ideology and the perceptions of culture that reproduce that same habitus (nationalist ideologies of apartheid or the continuous rejection of said ideas) in society (Reckwitz, 2002).

Bourdieu (1987:81-83) argues that the theory of habitus consists of the dispositions one learns due to class, family and culture, as well as history. Those in positions of power determine the doxa and culture of the field in which students act. In the context of this research study, the focus is on investigating the perceptions of transformation in the field established by the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. The perceptions of students evolve from their feelings, thoughts and values, which are internalised and generates meaning and perceptions (Bourdieu,1987:70).

The institutional culture of the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is, therefore, an important aspect in researching the perceptions of students towards transformation. In the Bourdieusian understanding, habitus offers the researcher a way of understanding

societal structures in how it is subjectively and collectively appropriated (Dalal, 2016:236). This is imbedded in the forms of knowledge and artefacts, for instance dominant languages, names on buildings and dominance of culture in a specific arena; in this case the NWU relies heavily on who has the most capital to own power and utilise it to create and enforce doxa (Dalal, 2016:235).

1.6.2. Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are the next important aspect of the framework in this study, to investigate the perceptions of students towards transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. This dimension has several features that are important. One of them is curriculum change, which is understood as determining an appropriate set of topics to be taught (Vorster & Quinn, 2016:4). The content of the topics is largely determined by the creation and construction of knowledge and narratives. In transformation this means an epistemological change not only directed to a different and positive future but also a decolonised sustainable future. This means that the content of what is taught in the curriculum, how it is taught, the students to which it is taught and by whom it is taught needs to shift from a confirmative over-exploitation of Western knowledge and reformative learning, towards a more transformative reconstruction of teaching and learning in higher education institutions, based on an African doxa (Vorster & Quinn, 2016:4; Filho *et al.*, 2018:287).

Due to South Africa's past, the current content in courses is dominated by Western and Northern thought. African students can feel academically alienated in academia, due to the challenge of beliefs and ideas that do not represent their understanding and meaning of self or value, in the context of Africa, South Africa and the North-West Province (Vorster & Quinn, 2016:5). The alienation stems from an epistemology that places knowledge as universal and not context-specific (Morrow, 1993 in Vorster & Quinn 2016:5, Mare, 2014:35). Like many other higher education institutions formed by colonial regimes, the debate and practice of decolonisation at the NWU has also been at the centre of transformation.

The Teaching and Learning Strategy Document of the NWU (2017:14-15) on transformation, expresses the sentiment that debates on decolonisation in faculties and the institution must be contextualised. The declaration on teaching and learning

transformation is centred on the concepts defined in the accepted transformation definition of the NWU.

The NWU, Potchefstroom campus has improved significantly over the years, in terms of demographics and the inclusion of race, gender, sexuality and religion in its students and staff, as stated in the Transformation initiatives as per the Steering Committee for Awareness of Gender within the DVC's office. However, it still lacks in terms of an inclusive teaching and learning institutional culture curriculum. Furthermore, the Transformation Charter of the NWU prescribes the ethic of care. This includes the relationship between and among management, staff and students. This is to ensure that there are no oppressive structures which belittle and discriminates against students and staff but has no focus on its application to culture. This indicates the necessity of an inclusive teaching and learning strategy at the NWU.

Curriculum transformation, however complex, is critical, especially in higher education institutions due to the constituencies, which carry very different and contested historical knowledge backgrounds (Maistry, 2011:118). As a result, the process to transform the curriculum, to accommodate diversity, can be long and slow and full of contradictions; hence the need for political will and academic stamina from staff and students are important. This study contributes to this matter specifically to reveal the perceptions of students on transformation concerning teaching and learning. This study allows students to share their perceptions and interpretations on this important aspect of transformation.

1.6.3. Student life

Student life is the last aspect in the framework to study students' perceptions on the transformation in higher education. These relates, for instance, to the cultural and social services made available in the university, as observed once enrolled in the institution. The NWU indicates that student life encompasses a diversity of cultures, knowledge systems, languages, religions, social habits, music and arts.

Culture, in this instance, refers to the patterns of behaviour and interactions due to socialisation. Culture is important in transformation, due to its relationship with power, as it relates to student life. This occurs as several universities in South Africa became more and more heterogeneous since the beginning of democracy, thus creating a need to have

a consensus on values (Mezirow, 1994). These values assure that no one culture has more privilege or priority over another. The problem is to ensure that different group interests are aligned, otherwise ideological differences may persist, which can be hard to resolve. This also holds for the social environment created at the university for the students.

The central theoretical framework for this research therefore has three dimensions. The first is on the social consciousness about transformation, the second is the distinctions between the social spheres in which transformation is understood and conducted, which include levels of social consciousness and thirdly, the higher education aspects of transformation, namely institutional culture, teaching and learning, and student life. In this research, these dimensions will be combined to research the perceptions of students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

1.7. Research methodology

This section of the chapter discusses the research methodology that guided the study in addressing the research question and objectives of the study. In this section, the research methodology will be explained in subsections, the first being the methodological approach and design, followed by the population and sampling of the study. Secondly, the data collection techniques and the strategies for data analyses will be explained. The quantitative version of the study focuses on the Potchefstroom campus, while the qualitative will look at the broader NWU context.

1.7.1. Methodological approach-9

Sarantakos (2013:121) argues that a research approach offers guidance to researchers. In this study the quantitative and qualitative research approaches will be combined. Neuman (2014:96) states that there are different types of research approaches associated with different social science theories. According to Neuman (2014:96), quantitative research approaches are followed by what is sometimes referred to as a knowable reality. Here, Neuman (2014:96) refers to objectivism, which is a characteristic of a positivist social science. Objectivism, according to Bryman (2016:29), refers to individuals being external actors observing social events.

Thus, the design that was used, stemming from the positivistic research approach, is a quantitative research approach. The quantitative research approach is characterised by numerical and structurally descriptive approaches. In addition, this design relies on measurement, statistics and scales (Bless et al., 2013:58). Additionally, there are disadvantages in using a quantitative study, especially when trying to adequately record meaning and context, since it is focused on statistics and closed questions (Bless *et al.*, 2013:58). Therefore, a qualitative approach was adopted. Qualitative research tends to take an inductive view of the relationship between social phenomenon and theory, although the dependence on individuals' stories or descriptions could be a disadvantage of mixed-method research (Bryman, 2012:380).

Combining these approaches in a mixed method approach increases validity and offers a more comprehensive, insightful and diverse depth to how transformation in its different dimensions is perceived (Greene *et al.*, 2001:41). As explained above, both the qualitative and quantitative research methods contain fundamental limitations, if used exclusively in researching specific phenomenon. As such, a mixed-method approach was utilised in this research study. Thereby the researcher can address the shortcomings of using only a quantitative or qualitative research approach. Allan, N.D., in Almalki (2016:291), refers to mixed method research as empirical research, which involves the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, whereas Johnson *et al.*, (2007:123) defines it as the type of research method that studies broad concepts in depth, by combining elements of quantitative and qualitative approaches for more solid understanding and corroboration.

For this study, the type of mixed-methods chosen is the explanatory sequential mixed-method design. This design is relevant as the data will be collected sequentially, in which the quantitative data will inform the qualitative research and in the end the results will be combined and interpreted (Creswell, 2014:219). In this design, the quantitative research was conducted first and then analysed and from the outcome of this analysis the qualitative research was conducted secondly. The result of the quantitative data collected determined or guided the qualitative data that was collected. This sequence ensured that the qualitative data helped to explain and elaborate on the quantitative results obtained in the first phase.

1.7.2. Research design

The study consists of two research approaches, the quantitative approach followed by the qualitative approach. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, as discussed, as two separate methodologies for the purpose of clarification and understanding of the phenomenon of the study. The quantitative research approach for the study of the perceptions of students at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus, used a survey or a cross-sectional design. It is associated with questionnaires that will be collected at a specific point in time on what their perspectives of transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom were (Bryman, 2016:52). The survey collected a variation of perceptions of students on their understanding of transformational issues (Bryman, 2016:53).

Secondly, the research design for the qualitative section of the research was in a form of a case study. This is since the study investigated, through qualitative research, a specific population at the NWU about transformation in higher education and transformation at the NWU. This population is student leaders. The qualitative research followed on the results of the quantitative questionnaires. The goal is to describe as accurately as possible the wide and varying characteristics and perceptions of transformation by students at the NWU.

A case study is a general term for exploring an individual, a group or a phenomenon (Sturman, 1997:61). It is defined by Mesec (1998:45), as a description of an individual case to enable researchers to identify structures, variables, forms and orders of interaction between the participants in the situation and with the specific phenomenon. Other definitions focus on the current phenomenon, lived experience and context (Yin, 2014:1; Baxter and Jack, 2008:545). The qualitative section of the study investigated the perceptions of student leaders on the progress of institutional transformation at the NWU.

In conclusion, the research approach used in this study are used in a mixed-method approach which seeks to integrate quantitative survey and qualitative case study research designs within a single study (Bryman, 2016: 628).

1.7.3. Population and sampling

In this section, the focus is on the population and sampling of the study. It should be noted that since the study is mixed methods this section will focus on the sampling in both the

quantitative and qualitative research. To ensure students have a significant institutional knowledge or experience of the NWU, this study focused on undergraduate students at the NWU. In the quantitative research, the focus was on the NWU, Potchefstroom campus students. This sample aimed to draw a representative sample from the student population of the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

It would be difficult to conduct a simple random sample of 18 309 students at the NWU. Therefore, a non-probability sample was selected, which best describes the student population. The study was conducted at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus, with a purposefully chosen quota sample of participants for the study. The sample was 270 undergraduate students from the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. The quota sampling was aimed at producing a sample that is representative of the population of the proportions of students in different categories (Bryman, 2012:203). In this quota sample the different categories were race, faculty and gender. Additionally, the realised sample for this study comprised of the 8 faculties at the NWU, namely, the Humanities, Health Sciences, Law, Theology, Engineering, Economic and Management Sciences, Education and Natural and Agricultural Sciences. This data collection was conducted by 7 postgraduate students, trained by Professor Zaaiman on how to conduct structured face-to-face interviews. Students had between 30- 50 interviews to conduct.

The sampling in the qualitative research focused on the Student Representative Council (SRC), the Student Campus Council (SCC) and students of the academic committees, due to their exposure to management and students debates about transformation. The study used a purposive non-probability sample method, as the participants were not randomly selected. This implies that the selection of participants was strategic. The sample consisted of between seven to eight SCC members from each academic committee from each campus at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. The sample was relatively effective in terms of the information needed to complete the study, without jeopardising the quality and existing knowledge of the phenomenon being studied (Sarantakos, 2013:178). Therefore, a purposive sample was used with 22 students at the NWU.

1.7.4. Data collection

The data was collected through interviews based on questionnaires. The qualitative study utilised focus groups due to the scheduling conflicts of different SCC members and the unavailability of said students and the researcher. Thus, the interviews were conducted through focus groups.

In the quantitative research, a structured questionnaire was utilised as an interview mechanism (Bryman, 2016:197). These interviews were conducted in 2022. For this study the population focus was the NWU, PC. Therefore, the data collection for this phase was focused on the students of the PC and the PC as a campus. The physical questionnaire excluded staff as the main focus was on students' perceptions of transformation at the NWU. Additionally, the former Vice Chancellors were interviewed just to ground the discussions. Furthermore, the students at the MC and VC were excluded from this phase due to costs and time limitations. Moreover, the study excluded any SCC or SRC member who did not hold a critical position for this study (i.e., sports and marketing portfolios).

This required all the items on perceptions to be measurable; additionally, all collection procedures must be above suspicion and prejudice (Cresswell, 2014:32). Likert scales on perceptions were used, among others, in the quantitative approach. Interestingly, this implied an overlap of quantitative research with the qualitative research on the study of the interpretations of people (Bryman, 2014: 466-467). This occurred as the options in terms of answers in the scale dilutes to an extent the ideals of objectivity. The questionnaire served the demand of conceptualisations in transformation, as it consists of many dimensions and perspectives. Thus, to fully appreciate the scope of transformation, this data collection method was used. Moreover, it provided more than one option when choosing an answer, thus increased the richness of the data collected, when having to extract the relevant themes for the qualitative interviews. The qualitative aspect allows the researcher to interview SRC members to gain a closer and more detailed opinion on transformation at the NWU.

Secondly, semi-structured interviews were used in the qualitative approach. Less structured interviews provided the opportunity to better understand the interviewee's point of view and allowed participants to elaborate and for follow-up questions to be asked that can probe further to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the participants

perceptions (Bryman, 2016:467). However, the questions were still pre-written. In addition, qualitative interviewing tended to be flexible, therefore the interviewer should be able to direct the conversation to cover the research question, based on how the interview is evolving (Bryman, 2016:467).

The qualitative data collection consisted of 19 interviews from the VC, MC and the PC. These interviews were in the form of focus groups first which occurred in 2022 at all three campuses. As the study was based particularly on the PC, interviews were done on 10 SCC members in the year 2024 at the Potchefstroom campus SRC offices. Furthermore, these conversations were substantiated, clarified, and vetted by the 7 SRC member interviews within the same time period. The face-to-face interviews excluded the MC and VC due to time constraints. It further excluded other student leaders from residencies or student led societies.

When conducting quantitative research, reliability and validity must be ensured to merit the research study. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire was sought through a pilot study of three to seven students and the interviews were conducted as objectively as possible. The same measures cannot be afforded to qualitative research. However, there are ways of ensuring that at the least there are parallels to this level of scrutiny. This is referred to as trustworthiness. To ensure validity and reliability, it uses credibility, which asserts that findings must be done according to protocol, all ethical steps must be followed and the investigator as well as the researcher must understand the phenomenon occurring in our social realities (Bryman, 2016:391).

Additionally, scholars like Gertz (1973a in Bryman, 2016:468), advocate that a researcher must ensure that the interviews generate thick descriptions. This refers to a database that can be used by others, to ensure the transferability of findings to another milieu. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1985:316), argue that the third characteristic of trustworthiness is dependability, which emphasises the importance of keeping complete records of data collected for audit purposes. Lastly, confirmability refers to an objective study in which the researcher acted honestly and without personal biases impacting on the research.

1.7.5. Data analysis

The research study used an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. This method used two phases. The first phase was the collecting of quantitative data from NWU, Potchefstroom campus' students. This was then analysed. The results were used to plan the qualitative phase of the research (Cresswell, 2014: 274). This is to clarify or support the survey results. The quantitative and qualitative databases were analysed separately and then compared and integrated.

Quantitative data analysis is a systematic process of data collection and evaluation of verifiable data. Quantitative data analysis used statistics to analyse data (Cresswell, 2007). Additionally, quantitative researchers will utilise computer mechanisms (SPSS 29) to administer, present and analyse the quantitative data. SPSS assisted the researcher in entering data, reporting statistics acquired. Through the use SPSS 29, descriptive statistics, Anova tests and T-tests as well as Post Hoc tests were used in providing methods for data analysis. Therefore, with these technological software two advantages occur. The researcher can systematically categorise, sum up and illustrate observations. These mechanisms are called descriptive statistics. In addition, the research can reduce the number of variables into factors to outline and interpret the patterns or relationships in the data. This was done through a factor analysis in order to preamble the descriptive statistics, ANOVA and post-hoc if required and T-tests.

The qualitative data is then analysed using SPSS and provided a systemic way of analysing qualitative data though coding (Friese, 2013:1). In this analysis, the data was coded and themes then identified. This was then compared to the results of the quantitative data and contrasted or integrated. In this study, the researcher utilises a thematic analysis for the data used. Themes in this case refer to the data information that is comprised of codes that combine to form a common idea (Creswell., 2011:410).

1.8. Ethical issues

It was important to consider the ethical guidelines or principles of research (Piper & Simons, 2005:56). The fact that the research was done on people and their welfare, ethical principles took priority. The following are the ethical considerations that were adhered to in this study as also suggested by Bryman (2012).

- To avoid ethical issues or harm to the participants, ethical clearance was obtained from the NWU ethics committee (NWU-0968-22-S7).
- The research sought consent from the participants at the beginning of each interview and ensured it was done wilfully. This was done through a written informed consent statement to which they agreed.
- Confidentiality for the qualitative data was obtained through informed consent, ensuring that sensitive information is stored safely and that names are not used in the reporting phase of the study.
- Anonymity in quantitative data was obtained through the changing of names to numbers or using nicknames or just names and not surnames of participants. More importantly, the quantitative phase only used statistics so names are not of importance thus maintains anonymity.
- The participants could withdraw from the study at any time. They were free to withdraw when they feel so for any reason.
- There were ethical issues faced when considering the rights of participants. Participants had the right to know what the study was about and that they were not being deceived. The consent form included a clear description of the study and indicated the ethics approval of the NWU.
- The research study did not cause any physical or psychological harm to participants. The study did not require any experimentation and the questions in the questionnaires avoided causing stress and anxiety or being personal.
- In addition, the researcher guaranteed privacy to the participants, and the information was kept confidential. This was done by using pseudonyms to keep their identities a secret.
- The research data collected was stored securely and held at the NWU research office after the study was completed. The data would not be generally available.

Lastly, the researcher did not deceive the scientific community and thus provided appropriate in-text references and a reference list.

1.9. Limitations of the study

Every study has limitations. This study anticipated the following limitations.

The first limitation referred to the conceptualisation process. The conceptualisation of the term “transformation” is widely contested, relativised and misunderstood. During the literature review, the concept transformation was accepted as different. Therefore, in researching the perspectives of students on transformation, scholars with different views on the concept of transformation can critique the study from that perspective.

A second limitation related to the methodology selected for this study. Through the stated mixed methods, an attempt was made to understand the perceptions of NWU, Potchefstroom campus students on transformation at the NWU. The sampling used for this study was limited and it can well be argued how accurately the results will reflect the perceptions of the total student population at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. However, this study provides a basis for further studies to compare results and broaden knowledge on this subject.

The last limitation is the focus of the study on the Potchefstroom campus. Students of the Mahikeng and the Vaal campuses, excluding some SCC members of the NWU, are not included in the survey. However, the inclusion of SCC students from all three campuses may have provided some idea of whether the attempt to align policies at the NWU created similar or different responses toward transformation.

1.10. Significance of the study

The research study contributes to the complex, dynamic and contested conversation on transformation and specifically higher education transformation in South Africa. Literature (Prinsloo, 2016; Pretorius, 2017, Kamsteeg & Wels, 2014) did describe transformation at the NWU. However, in terms of focus and approach, this study is unique in focusing on the perceptions of students on transformation in higher education at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. The literature gives little insight in the perceptions of NWU students on transformation in relation to their social consciousness about transformation, their involvement in transformation and transformation in different social spheres and their relationship to the universities institutional culture, teaching and learning, and student life. This study contributes to an understanding of this.

This study therefore contributes to understanding more about views on transformation in the context of diversity in policies of the NWU. From this research, the response of students to transformation can be better understood. The first is the use of transformation in the context of diversity in the policies of the NWU. This information can also help to evaluate the way in which transformation is understood and exercised at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

This study therefore contributes to knowledge about transformation in the context of an evolving project of transformation at the NWU. The NWU, through its phases of transformation, has shown that it is on a journey to create an institutional culture and a teaching and learning environment that is inclusive, with a student life that values every student. This study contributes to this journey, by asking students to participate by adding their perceptions on transformation at the NWU. This can contribute to refinements and improvements of the transformation processes at the NWU.

1.11. Preliminary chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter offers an introduction and an orientation to the study. In addition, it provides the problem statement or the interest in conducting the research study followed by the research question, research objectives, research design, theoretical framework, the ethics, limitations as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Understanding higher education transformation with an application to the NWU

This chapter provides the literature review on transformation, higher education transformation and emphasise how literature interprets higher education transformation.

This literature review focuses on understanding the dynamics of transformation in higher education. In Chapter 2, lexical definitions are discussed to provide an idea of the general understanding of transformation. Thereafter, theoretical interpretations are conceptualised to provide a structured understanding of transformation which thereafter leads to the model explaining the interpretation of transformation in this study.

Additionally, a background of transformation in the South Africa higher education sector is offered as well as a look into global events of transformation.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research methodology used for this study on perceptions of the NWU, Potchefstroom students' higher education transformation, as experienced at the NWU. It outlines the research paradigms and the designated designs for the study. Furthermore, it elaborates on the chosen research method (mixed methods) details the sampling method, data collection method, analysis and conclusions from said analysis.

Chapter 4: Analysis, interpretation and discussing the findings

This chapter interprets the statistical data analysed in relation to transformation in student perceptions at the NWU, PC. This chapter focuses on the observed patterns in the data collected through the quantitative phase using SPSS 29. Discusses the quantitative analysis of student perceptions of transformation at the NWU, PC using SPSS 29. It elaborates and displays the practicality of the methods discussed in chapter 3. This refers to the use of descriptive statistics, factor analysis, Anova and T-tests to capture the perceptions of students.

Chapter 5 provides the analysis of the data, interpretation of the data and the discussion on the results obtained from the qualitative analysis of the data. In this chapter the qualitative themes were discussed and interpreted using theory and statistics where applicable. For instance, the generally perceived interpretation of transformation along with the interpretation of transformation at the NWU, PC, MC and VC.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter concludes the study and provides recommendations that can be made regarding transformation at the NWU. It further offers recommendations on future research on transformation and the ethical discussion that governed the study.

1.12. Conclusion

In conclusion, transformation in higher education institutions takes place in different dimensions and context. These dimensions are the social consciousness about transformation, the social spheres in which transformation is understood and conducted and the higher education aspects of transformation namely, institutional culture, teaching and learning, as well as student life. These dimensions and contexts present a terrain for an investigation into the daily challenges and issues of students with regards to transformation.

CHAPTER 2: UNDERSTANDING TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION WITH FOCUS ON NWU

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 1 has alluded in summary to what describes this research study. As a result, from the literature, the nature of transformation in higher education in South Africa is investigated, defined through lexicons and interpreted through theoretical and historical lenses. The particular focus of this study is on the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. This section of the study includes perspectives on transformation, which attempt to be lenses for understanding, perceiving and analysing transformation. Additionally, it provides conceptual arguments of transformation linked to lexical definitions of transformation. Therefore, this chapter intends to lay a foundation, through the conceptualisation of transformation for this research study. This introduces discussions suggesting a framework for investigating the transformation perceptions of students at the NWU. It should be noted that some elements of the chapter may appear as repetitions from Chapter 1 or across sections. These repetitions are necessary as a basis for elaborating on the meaning of transformation. This chapter commences with the lexical and conceptual understanding of transformation.

2.2. Defining transformation

Transformation is a very broad phenomenon. Therefore, in this dissertation, the concern is towards the perspectives of students on transformation at the NWU. As a result, the first task of this study is acknowledging what constitutes transformation. To accomplish this, the section describes firstly the general dictionary definitions of transformation and what the general outline of transformation is. Additionally, this section attempts to conclude with a fitting definition for its purpose by moving to what transformation is in the higher education sector and specifically the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus.

Transformation has attracted a lot of interest in recent years and as such, the meaning of transformation has evolved and further broadened. To understand transformation, the conceptual links and patterns apparent from lexical definitions of transformation are an

important consideration. Examples of such general definitions that relate to the higher education situation in South Africa are listed in Table 2.1. The meanings extracted from the lexical definitions of transformation are an important feature in interpreting the participants' understanding thereof. Although participants may not be aware of the dictionary definitions, there is a relation to their common knowledge of what transformation is.

Table 2.1. Transformation definitions (Mcwabeni, 2023)

Cambridge Dictionary (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved • a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone
Collins Dictionary (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a change or alteration, especially a radical one • the act of transforming or the state of being transformed • (in South Africa) a national strategy aimed at attaining national unity, promoting reconciliation through negotiated settlement and non-racism
Merriam-Webster Dictionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change in form, appearance, or use • An act, process, or instance of transforming or being transformed
Dictionary.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change in form, appearance, nature, or character
Longman Dictionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complete change in someone or something
Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complete change from something to something else • It's a change of form and structure
Chambers Dictionary 10 th edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation means to change the shape of, to change especially radically or thoroughly to another form
Webster Comprehensive Dictionary International edition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation is the act of transforming or the state of being transformed

The meaning of transformation, as indicated in Table 2.1, attracted a lot of interest in recent years. This contributed to a common understanding of what transformation constitutes. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2021), transformation is defined as a complete change or character of something or someone. This definition is useful to illuminate the situation or person that transformation is set to impact. However, it is important to note that many dictionaries retain the Cambridge perspective of transformation as the complete change of something, someone, some shape, or some form into another.

In the Merriam-Webster dictionary, transformation is defined as change in form or appearance. This definition focuses on the outcome of change rather than what or who can change. Moreover, the Merriam-Webster (2021) dictionary further expands the definition to include the act, process, or instance of transforming. As a result, the nature of transformation is also highlighted. Transformation from this perspective includes the function of transformation (Dictionary.com, 2021; MacMillian Dictionary, 2021; Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2021; Champers Dictionary, 2021; Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, International edition, 2021). Thereby, from the definitions in Table 2.1, the following can be assumed: transformation is the act, process, or instance that results in a complete or thorough change in form, shape, appearance, nature, structure, use, or character of something or someone.

However, the Collins Dictionary (2021) mentions a unique usage of transformation in the context of South Africa. In South Africa, it is described as a "national strategy aimed at attaining national unity, promoting reconciliation through negotiated settlement and non-racialism". Transformation can therefore, in the context of this study, be defined as processes that are managed to completely change the structure, character and functioning of South African institutions and practices to address the injustices and inequalities of the past. Additionally, transformation is a tool to accomplish a just and unified society or universities. In this study, it is measured through the use of quantitative methods to establish the perceptions of the NWU, PC students on transformation at the NWU. The quantitative questionnaires offer a theme for the qualitative phase of the data collected, which focused on the NWU student leaders' views on transformation. To accomplish this foundational objective between quantitative and qualitative research, transformation in the context of South Africa needs to be defined as set out bellow.

2.2.1. Defining transformation in the South African higher education context

Given the above-mentioned unique usage of the concept of transformation in South Africa, transformation in higher education institutions refers to a specific managed process. The purpose of transformation in the context of South African higher education institutions is to redress past inequalities in the sector. This refers to the national strategy to address the past inequalities related to ideals of access, equality, equity and “diversity”. It attempts to promote diversity, social cohesion and integration in the institution as well as the epistemic freedom in its functioning. Furthermore, transformation in this perspective is based on the humanitarian and democratic frameworks able to address institutional challenges to transformation in higher education.

Transformation is therefore a process of change that requires the ethos that prevailed in the past to be replaced with a new humanitarian and democratic culture to undo the past social order. This transformation ideal led to the merging of higher education institutions in 2002-2004. Higher education in South Africa refers to universities, technikons and colleges of tertiary learning. For the purpose of this study, the consideration is limited to only the University. Waghid (2002:) referred to transformation as a response to a future wished for. This future implicates the significance of symbols such as names and statues, the demographic changes on campuses of higher education institutions, culture, curriculum changes as well as success in terms of how many students are obtaining degrees in record time. Hence the merging of higher education institutions.

Therefore, through the National Committee of Higher Education (NCHE), the understanding of said challenges became clearer. Higher education in South Africa needed restructuring and so it was defined as universities, technikons and colleges. For this study, the focus was on universities in Higher Education. In South Africa, higher education evolved over the years from a fragmented and structurally racialised system of 36 public universities in 1994, to a relatively integrated system of 26 universities in the early 2000s (Keet & Swartz, 2015:1). In this study, the focus was not on the burden of universities as compared to colleges but on a single institution's transformation from the broader conversations of transformation in policy and law beginning with the CHE (1998).

As a result, the Conference of Higher Education in 1998 asserted the preamble to transformation in higher education as equality, equity and access based on massification,

diversity and demographic transformation in higher education. This led to a strategy of transformation in higher education that went beyond the access of women and Black persons into institutions of higher learning but also looked into access to financing for previously disadvantaged institutions for a purposeful and transformative structural reorganisation in higher education. Seabi *et al.*, (2012:66-68) argue that transformation in higher education includes radical policy changes on behalf of the previously disadvantaged. The result is the transformation of structure and agency in higher education via learning, institutional culture, systematic management and structural changes in higher education according to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996). This was to ensure accountability, autonomy and epistemic freedom (Du Toit, 2000). Transformation is therefore a process of change that requires the ethos that prevailed in the past to be replaced with a new democratic culture, to undo the past social order. This transformation ideal led to the merging of higher education institutions in 2002-2004.

As a result, the “future wished for” phenomenon in transformation, was aligned to the preamble in the national strategy on transformation. The Conference of Higher Education (CHE) in 1998 asserted this preamble to transformation in higher education as equality, equity and access. This preamble is reflected by the massification and diversity in transformation within higher education. Transformation in this perspective addressed access to financing for the previously disadvantaged institutions and the transformative structural reorganisation in higher education. Seabi *et al.*, (2012:66) supports this perspective, arguing that transformation in higher education should further include radical policy changes on behalf of institutional culture, opportunity and academic freedom.

Waghid (2002) referred to transformation as a response to a future wished for. This future implicates the significance of symbols such as names and statues, the demographic changes on campuses of higher education institutions, the culture, the curriculum changes as well as success in terms of how many students are obtaining degrees in record time. Waghid (2002:459) accepts the dictionary definition of transformation as a change from one form to another, however, further asserts that “transformation also evolves into students’ knowledge, skills, potential or even the process of construction and deconstruction. As such, transformation is an ongoing process of acquiring knowledge in

every context and a process of which no correct projections can be made about the future in light of the past and present socio-political developments”.

Nkomo and Akoojee (2007, 386) argued that it is important to note that access does not automatically ensure success. As a result, access and equality in higher education were broadened to include an emphasis on participation and diversity, while simultaneously focussing on improving the success of the previously disadvantaged in higher education institutions, by measuring the throughput and dropout rates as well as the time taken to complete a degree. For this redress and equity to succeed, financial support was viewed as important, as well as diverse representation within higher education (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007).

In Agar (1990); Van Heerden (1995); Kagee *et al.* (1997); Mabokela (1997) and Cherian and Cherian (1998), transformation is interpreted as a process of reorganisation of higher education and not only a process of redress through access, participation and equality Dowling (1999:10). Dowling (1999:10) further asserts that in addition to the above-mentioned imperatives to transformation, is equity to redress. The challenge, however, is the political dialectics between institutional autonomy and the national imperatives of efficiency, equity and redress to ensure a balance between success and the mass input of students from an unequal primary and secondary education system. It is the perspective of this study to include students as part of the dialectics to the national imperative of efficient equity and redress as silent stakeholders in higher education.

This political contention of access as transformation in higher education represented a moment of racial transformation, as increased non-racial participation ensured the de-racialisation of higher education. This focus on access was complemented with a focus on financial support, module and course success of students through creating supporting systems like reading and writing labs, facilitation and tutors, as well as psychological support for students to enhance said successes (Nkomo and Akoojee, 2007: 391). However, higher education policies continue to struggle in offering access of different cultural nuances in terms cultural traditions in the collective sub-cultures that make up the institutional cultures of higher education institutions (Kessi and Cornell 2016:1894).

In Luescher, T.M., & Tumubweinee (2019:12), the role of higher education institutions in the transformation of higher education in South Africa is to ensure that universities will

play a "critical role in an emerging, non-racial, progressive democracy. The goal thereof is to produce critical and independent citizens as well as skilled and socially committed graduates who would be capable of contributing to social and economic development" (Webbstock, 2016:22 cited by Luescher, T.M., & Tumubweinee, 2019:13). This implies that post-apartheid transformation in higher education is therefore not only about demographic achievements of equity in staff and student bodies of institutions or the quantitative and qualitative improvement of the outputs of higher education. Transformation is about creating a system that plays an important role in building an open, democratic and post-apartheid society with a citizenry who are informed, critical, and socially aware. This means that transformation mandates itself as access to a space in student life interpreted through experience of a sub-system within a larger system of higher education.

As a result, Lumadi (2021:38) propounds transformation in higher education as the fundamental changes characterised by a "concern for educational justice, advocacy for freedom, autonomy, democratic engagement and the responsiveness to the othering of African philosophy". In line with this perspective, transformation must ensure that the Global North and the Global West take Africa's education seriously. Le Grange (2014:140) continues the argument by asserting that transformation in higher education uses decolonisation as a language of resistance to detail and redress historical struggles for social justice, equality and equity and in this space its relation to social realities in the broader sense of society is important. Tumubweinee and Luescher (2019:10) compounded the social reality of space with politics to address the unequal power in academia between students, academics and policies to address said struggles in transformation for access (Fataar, 2018: vii). Transformation, therefore, is about bridging that academic gap.

From the literature, it can therefore be concluded that transformation in the South African higher education context relates to:

- non-racialism, equity, support, efficiency, equality, inclusion, quality, freedom, autonomy, democratic engagement and responsiveness;
- educational justice and epistemic freedom which includes also taking African knowledge systems seriously;

- transformed institutional culture, systems and improved demographic profiles;
- new constructs of race and gender, and
- community embeddedness.

The result of such a transformation must be:

- higher education institutions that are accessible (including aid, knowledge systems), democratic, accommodating (including mentoring, learning styles, knowledge systems), open spaces and with discourses characterised by equity and equality; and
- alumni who are critical, informed, skilled, independent and socially aware and socially committed citizens.

In the context of student perceptions on transformation, the above framework of higher education transformation is essential to the growing concern of this stud. That being the engagement of structure with agency in interpreting perceptions of transformation. Section 2.3 seeks to facilitate the discussion on how theories are concerned with perceptions of transformation.

2.3. Theories concerned with perceptions of transformation

In the preceding section, perspectives on transformation were discussed. What follows in this section is a discussion of theoretical perspectives applicable as a lens to understanding the dynamics of transformation. Transformation as a phenomenon has a variety of theoretical approaches that can be employed in an interpretation of a transformation research project. This especially happens when the phenomenon can occur both within and beyond universities as a social realm and on a singular aspect of a multi-faceted approach. Therefore, to investigate the perceptions of NWU students on transformation, both an interpretivist-constructivist and structural approach is used as a balance of both the position of individuals and of institution who comprise it.

The purpose of this study arises from the fact that higher education in South Africa needs to represent the larger project of transformation in South Africa. Additionally, this study seeks an understanding and insight into transformation through the perspective of

students on a particular campus at the NWU. For example, gestures like language spoken, dominant cultures, food, headsets used for language interpretation and socio-economic class represent some of the underlying principles of qualitative transformation. To accomplish this feat, this study adopts an approach with an understanding of transformation from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. Moreover, within higher education, this approach seeks to offer a connection of agency and structure. This is since the agency-structure debate emphasises the relation between human agents, their interpretations of gestures and the social structures and the institutions by which they exist (Giddens, 1979:53;62). For instance, although structures and societies can be argued to exist objectively, they are not entirely beyond the control of the actors who create and maintain them.

The purpose of this approach to this study is explained in Bourdieu's theoretical work (Bourdieu, 1990b:25; Jenkins, 1992:25). Firstly, science should not separate objectivism and subjectivism from phenomena being studied. Secondly, the relationship between agency-structure should be understood in consideration that neither occurs in a vacuum. Lastly, this understanding of the interplay between agency-structure should be analysed in consideration of each other. As a result, the point of departure of this study is towards an interpretation of transformation from an interpretivists perspective and a structuralist perspective at the NWU.

2.3.1 Understanding Interpretivist/constructivist transformation

The interpretive and constructivist forms of transformation are useful in discussing perceptions of transformation in this study. Interpretivism is layered by ideas stemming from the tradition of hermeneutics, the *Verstehen* idea in sociology and the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz. This scientific philosophy posits that traditionally; the goal of the social sciences is based on the grasping and understanding of meaning in social phenomena. Perspectives on change, or transformation in this instance, require interpretation from these subjective understandings of culture, education, history and the influence they have on lived experience(s) (Weber, 1947). The nature, therefore, of interpretive knowledge, states that transformational phenomenon is complex and multi-layered, due to the interdependence of history and its language through time (Ryan, 2018:8).

Furthermore, interpretivism distinguishes itself through two key components, as argued by Schutz (1967:57). According to him, *Verstehen* is concerned with grasping intersubjective meanings and symbolising activities subjective to those meanings in real life. This refers to how we get to recognise and create meaning through being knowledgeable about human affairs. Secondly, interpretivism is differentiated by the epistemological question of how *Verstehen* is possible and subsequently answered by the ontology of life and the world individuals occupy. In sum, *Verstehen* is concerned with how individuals interpret and make sense of the world in which they are living. Unlike, the natural sciences, where molecules, atoms and electrons mean nothing to the world they live in, in the social sciences, social reality has a specific meaning and structure for the human beings living, acting and thinking within it (Schutz, 1967:59).

Thus, it motivates behaviour that constructs our daily lives. This implies that the interpretivist paradigm provides a way in how human behaviour influences the construction of components, factors and elements of transformation. Interpretivism allows us to separate the objective nature of transformation in higher education institutions. This paradigm allows individuals to shape understanding of phenomena by taking their beliefs, values and experiences to construct a perception of transformation (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:41-42). Therefore, interpretivism in this study considers how the above-mentioned influence culture and how culture influences perceptions of transformation in times of development.

As a result, the epistemological question of the “how” is found in a closely associated concept to interpretivism, namely constructivism. Constructivism is an approach that asserts that reality and human behaviour are both characterised by adjustments and transformations occurring in society (Van der Walt, 2020:61). Constructivists, like interpretivists, place emphasis on the world of experience, as it is lived and undergone by individuals (Lincoln & Denzin, 1998:236). Scholars in this social theory assert an interest in dealing with how facts emerge and how truths are shaped. Constructivists are of the view that what we take to be objective truths is a result of perspective. The emphasis, therefore, is that knowledge and truth are constructed and not observed by the mind (Bruner, 1986:95). The emphasis of constructivism is on the pluralistic character of reality. This refers to the fact and difference that reality is pluralistic in that it is expressible

in a variety of symbols and language systems. Reality, in this sense, occurs from the contextual nature of knowledge and knowledge of meaning construction.

In the context of this study, how meaning is constructed is important. As such, to explain these overtones in the formulation of meaning and the difference in perspectives used, there exists interchangeable phrases. In addition, there are various forms in the construction of meaning, which uses some quantitative and qualitative paradigms (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:42). This is likely due to the specific boundaries or focus of the phenomena being studied, the population being studied or the area of which the sample is used. It is important to note that there is no complete eradication of mechanical and organic societies and their influence in an abstract or literal sense. Hence, the three spheres of which transformation within the study is framed.

Mezirow (1978), supports the argument that meaning is created through a set of predispositions resulting from lived experiences, socialisation and personal history. These predispositions contain meaning perspectives and are due to the social interaction between individuals and institutions through language, doxa and the practice of shared experiences. These meaning perspectives consist of three codes that shape perception, feelings and cognition. The first is the socio-linguistic codes which refer to social norms, ideologies and theories we make about everyday life. Secondly, psychological codes, referring to personality traits and parental prohibitions (pre- socialisation) of particular feelings or actions. Lastly, epistemic codes as the way in which people learn and therefore shape perceptions through social ontology (Mezirow, 1994:224). This process is referred to, in this study, as the socialisation of meaning through tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka, 1994; Kekwaletswe, 2007).

Kekwaletswe (2007:46) argues that meaning involves both tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge refers to cognitive and technical elements, which individuals use to create meaning in a specific context, like the personal sphere. In explicit knowledge, discrete and digital records of the past, through libraries and databases, are utilised in the practical and political sphere. Perceptions of transformation are thus constructed as an interpretation of the modern era. It represents the agency-structure dichotomy as a ubiquitous phenomenon. This phenomenon is explained through conceptual metaphors. Conceptual metaphors in this study also aid in understanding agency as a process.

Conceptual metaphors refer to how individuals use agency to understand a particular concept, which is typically abstract in relation to an existing concrete concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 232-233). Conceptual metaphors are central to our ways of understanding. For instance, Lakoff and Johnson (1999), argue that the mind is embodied, thought is mostly unconscious, and abstract concepts are largely metaphorical. Transformation is an abstract concept. The ways in which we think and act with regards to it is due to a conceptual system, which is metaphoric in nature. Metaphors structure our understandings since metaphors have entailments through which they highlight and make coherent certain aspects of our experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:156). Metaphors create realities when acted upon, as well as offering access to a range of experiences. Conceptual metaphors utilise a process called structural mapping. Structural-mapping, or correspondence, refers to knowledge of the known used to understand what is abstract and build structures from it (Daane *et al.*, 2018:1055). Schon (1979:266), argues that conceptual metaphors would for instance use the word “structure” to invoke a metaphor of seeing understanding-as-buildings.

This meaning trigger what is referred to by Giddens as a double hermeneutic (Karp, 2023:134). A double hermeneutic provide a framework for how an individual thinks, conceptualises and makes sense of the world. Karp (2023) explains a double hermeneutic as a process in which the “the participant interprets the research process and instruments; secondly, the research interprets the interpretations of the participants which incorporates the subjectivity of participants into an explanatory model that uses terms derived from their experiences to the observer”. This implies that actions following a reflection on a particular phenomenon, using their own worldviews and beliefs, can bring about change. Therefore, how social reality at the NWU is interpreted by students and interpreted to the researcher, is crucial to how social actors understand and shape frameworks that this phenomenon seeks to describe. The resultant meaning constructed or interpreted from the process of conceptualising abstract phenomenon becomes the perceptions investigated in this study (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 232-223).

Conceptual metaphors have become a response to the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of abstract perceptions of phenomena within a defined discourse. Therefore, seeking an understanding of transformation perceptions independently from conceptual metaphors is unlikely to succeed. This occurs as there is no clear and

comprehensive conceptual basis in the literature available for transformation from the perception of students at the NWU. For instance, culture is a metaphor for students' experiences of belonging. Thus, the bases of such concepts are in how the experience, culture and history of said perceptions from participants are understood for the purpose of higher education policies (Robertson, Hagland, Daane, Close & Scherr, 2018:1052). Thus, to connect what perceptions of transformation are to individuals and institutions of higher learning, metaphorical concepts are used as a crucial pedagogy to transformation discourses and the role of agency. The three-part model of spheres serves the purpose for this study. Chasi and Gumede (2020) states that the importance of said processes is in the fact that higher education in South Africa will always be fundamental to how culture and language have evolved in South Africa's post-colonial era, including apartheid and the advent of democracy.

Moreover, Sage *et al.* (2021:4), along with Ison, et al., (2015:1699-1700), elucidate on these conceptual metaphors as a mechanism to understanding of phenomena. In this study, the argument for perceptions is rooted in what the next phase of transformation should be. This occurs as transformation is a phenomenon understood in terms of measurable and objective comparisons to one's qualitatively lived experiences. These experiences are influenced socially, economically, culturally and politically, as structural forces resulting from continued challenges stemming from the apartheid era. These challenges are analysed and addressed, in most cases quantitatively, for affirmative action policies seeking redress in universities. The next phase in transformation is argued to be based on an analysis of these factors qualitatively. The mentioned authors support this argument in stating that a community or society interacts and associates meaning with their needs, values and beliefs. From this perspective arises the political, personal and practical spheres in transformation. If the political, personal, or practical spheres transgress on these values, beliefs or needs, it is the legal rights (belonging) and the set of responsibilities (authentic social capital) within individuals that is violated. As a result, a transformation process or event is triggered.

Additionally, the practices of institutions and bureaucracies that ensure transformation within a particular social realm are also challenged to transform in the same vein as individuals do. These interactions differ from one society to another. Therefore, the same should be expected within higher education institutions. Additionally, these interactions

aid in assisting individuals to intentionally comprehend the dialectical drama of lived experiences regarding transformation (Mullay & Sage, 2021:4; Ison *et al.*, 2015: 1699-1700). At the NWU, this dialectical process occurred as the university embarked on a merger of three universities into a single entity. This process was particularly relevant in a shared democracy as how individuals think, communicate and conceptualise democracy was an important societal phenomenon to transformation at the NWU. The merging of the MC, VC and the PC was aimed at restructuring social facts, which have coerced and excluded certain groups and individuals.

As already stated in the above arguments, transformation in higher education institutions from an interpretative perspective rest on how reality is perceived by the students. This reality is perceived through values, beliefs and worldviews. This reality is constructed through economic, social, cultural and political identities. When individuals walk into a university, they can already interpret and construct perceptions of transformation from their lived experiences. These lived experiences are constructed within the particular sphere, which are not only limited to the NWU but also of the society. The conception and perception of social reality are thus always reproduced, due to the transcendent nature of the factors within these three spheres. Transformation from this perspective argues that individuals who exist in them can recreate agency, structures, their own understanding and their own transformational identity. This transformational identity can occur as a drastic event or a process (a build up to) to transformation. In this study, an argument is made to reject the idea that the university and the university management are one and the same thing to students.

The argument is that the university becomes a grand field in which students, management and the university core business are said to operate. All these participants in the grand field both constructs, interpret and reproduce transformation phenomena. If this freedom to construct, to be part of transformation, is the case, then everything defined within the parameters of the three spheres of transformation is affected positively. Within this transformation of a particular society, the actors choose and act to define transformation, based on their sense of belonging through multi-diverse cultures. Student perceptions through these spheres are always maintained through the negotiation and exchanging of social, economic, political and cultural capital.

In concluding this discussion on interpretivism in relation to transformation, certain factors discussed must be re-emphasised. Weber (1947) and Schutz (1967) contend that an interpretation of transformation contains subjective and intersubjective meanings of culture and history of lived experiences. This perspective is concerned with the understanding and the interpretation of lived reality. This understanding is associated with constructivism. Constructivism associated with said interpretations is utilised as a balance mechanism in the conversation of perceptions of transformation. These two positions perform the mechanical role of a piston in this discourse. Both emphasise the world of experience while constructivism is more concerned with how the world of experience is constructed.

Adding to this dynamic nature of interpretivist and constructivist perspectives is the role of meaning and how it is linked to abstract perceptions of phenomena. Mezirow's (1978) contribution in this case essentially adds socialisation, pre-socialisation and epistemic codes at the individual level. Furthermore, this relationship between meaning and perceptions is better understood using conceptual metaphors. Reality, in this instance, is due to the ability of metaphors to operationalise through dialogue, transformation theories, perceptions and perspectives into concrete and objectifiable discourse. These metaphors link abstract phenomena and ideas to concrete and constructed realities. The following section further elaborates on the understanding and formation of structure in abstract phenomena.

2.3.2. Understanding a structuralist interpretation of transformation

Over the years, there have emerged types or categories of structuralisms (Mayhew, 1980:335). Applicable for this study is the deterministic model utilised to explain socio-economic inequalities in education in Marxism (Lynch & O'Riordan, 1998:446). Determinism in this sense refers to a capitalist system that determines class outcomes, thus reproducing inequality (i.e., Apartheid). Lynch and O'Riordan (1998), argue that Marxist and Functionalist structuralism are the two dominant and traditional models.

In Marxism, the role of higher education is seen as reproducing class inequality and thus serves to continue the structural instability of higher education institutions, as witnessed by the #FeesMustFall protest. This point relates to the arguments made by Adam Habib's book "Rebels & Rage" (2017). Habib (2017) argues against the use of certain tax models

to sustain the funding of higher education intuitions. Habib purports that there is no logic to fully subsidise access to the higher education economy when the tax base of the national economy is limited (Habib, 2017:178). His argument can be interpreted on the fact that every institution belonging to the state marks a microscopic reflection within a capitalist society of the national economy (Habib, 2017:179). Additionally, other arguments which protested the outsourcing of services within higher education institutions proves that a free higher education is unsustainable to the state.

Therefore, Karl Marx's formulated principle about structuralism insists that everything happens at the macro level. As a result, the individual is just a passive reflection of processes that occur independently to him/her, which structuralists like Durkheim would refer to as social facts (Piaget, b, 393 in Mayhew, 1980: 335; Stewart & Zaaiman, 2014:21). Structuralists conceive that society does not consist of individuals but the sum of all the inter-relations and the social structures that emerge from it as organised institutions. These classical theorists suggest that a structuralist must concern him or herself with how these social structures are organised in relation to cultural or ideological systems, as well as its underlying demographic nature.

In contrast to Functionalism, the modern and developed society does not explain the social order a person participates in or belong to. Individuals are pushed into classes with or without their own knowledge, through social facts. Marx's argument is against the idea that the class outcomes can be the same (Lynch & O'Riordan, 1998:446). Lynch and O'Riordan (1998), state that the plea by students to decolonise higher education is due to the insecurity of whether the higher education curriculum produces employable students for the environment.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) made important points within structuralism in relation to this study. They refer to structural determinants of transformation in higher education as not possible without considering the role of culture and history. The purpose, therefore, of any discourse on social transformation should attempt to at least integrate the macrocosmic (decolonial and apartheid legacy) and microcosmic (the individual class, values, ideas, beliefs and status) explanation. This implies that what pushes students or individuals into a certain belief, value or action should be considered as an act influenced by societal factors, with or without the knowledge of the actor and vice versa. As such,

structuralism should capture this reality in attempting to interpret transformation within a particular phenomenon.

The agency and structure relationship highlights the theoretical objectives for this study. For instance, this dissertation includes a perspective from both the agent and the structure. However, the approach differs. In other words, the individuals and the social forces created from the social structures occurs differently (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998:962; Giddens, 1979:62). The approach, in this instance, is to emphasise the need to allow agency to independently create a common system for a common culture, for the purpose of transformation at the NWU. Therefore, actors (students in this case) create and maintain the structure, through systems formed from agency. Bourdieu (1990:25) supports this argument, by stating that subjectivism cannot be separated from objectivism. These concepts should be understood and studied in how they can and should relate to each other.

Therefore, a discourse regarding transformation is abstract and difficult to observe or capture without the constructive and concrete nature of agency and structure. Additionally, they are interpreted as natural, due to the hidden coercion of social facts and social forces; thus, the need for a deeper analysis from both a quantitative and qualitative position (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:171). Therefore, applying this agency-structure relationship in transformation at the NWU, the following is important. The first is that the study contends that the student is the agent of which the University (the structure), has an influence on. As a result, the agent and the structure create personalities and identities of each other. Additionally, the individual, as a human subject, is not always decentred, but an individual is not the focus and vice versa (Gough, 2010:3). As a result, explanations of social interactions which arise from the predetermination of social structures, will not allow the centre of society to be individual thought, thus the structure-agent dichotomy.

Its only objective is to go deeper into the motivation behind structuralism. Morgan and Norton (2012:2-3) assert that post-structuralism takes the position that the signifying practices of societies are that of struggle and thus societies can never be deemed homogenous. Agency, however, was more concerned with the multiplicity and instability of meaning (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:176). In this perspective, agency to post-structuralists consist of multiple meanings. One of the most unique aspects of being part of the NWU

is its political history. These past ideologies still create a form of “nationalism”, which arises from the shared heritage and culture on each campus that will only change through integrating diversity to dilute that unconscious force on each campus. This integration of diversity also combats the social forces that arise through politics since the option for change from an agency perspective occurs through power (politics).

Higher education transformation can therefore be a structure that influences positive transformations and positive perceptions of transformation. The agents are the symbols which are used to define the perceptions of transformation, linked to diversity, gender equality, non-racial policies, equity and access, to name a few. In this study, the structure refers to the former Potchefstroom University of Christian Higher Education (PUCHE) and University of North West (UNW) and how that structure reproduces force. The PUKKE and the UNW on their own represent particular universities. However, with the addition of religious, political, educational conventions and ideologies, the picture becomes clearer in terms of which campus is more conservative and which is more liberal. Therefore, transformational structuralism in this study includes the power inequalities arising from the ideological histories within the different relationships found in structure and agency (Mayhew, 1980).

Walker et al., (2006) further add that a structuralist interpreted transformation is fundamentally the creation of a new system with radical changes. These changes to its ecological, economic and social structures make the existing system redundant. The idea of a structuralist perspective on transformation is that the current system cannot support the long-established systems reoccurring in society. Radical structuralist transformation could be interpreted as a lead to a more socio-ecological change, which moves society further away from previous ways of living. To most scholars (Feola, 2015, O'Brien, 2012, Moore *et al.*, 2014, Folke *et al.*, 2010), structuralist transformation occurs as a process which leads to a radical event. Therefore, in approaches like structuralism and the structuration paradigm lies the justification for how perceptions of transformation are important. It is in the fact that micro-processes are most likely linked to macro-forms and individual behaviour in organisations as mentioned above.

Structuralism in this perspective launches transformation into a realm whereby it emphasises structural elements of transformation. These realms surround the

acknowledgment of the influence on individuals by structural elements, but not as a focus on structuralism. Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) offer a reiteration of this section by stating that perspectives in the study argue that microcosmic and macrocosmic explanations of social phenomenon are important for any discourse. So, in this case, transformation needs to find a space in both the physical and abstract positions, while offering its value to structuration. The purpose of culture, history and social facts in transformation is to show that transformation from this perspective goes beyond the usual objective positions of bureaucracies (statistics). Structuralism offers the unique perspective of creating the possibility of going beyond traditional social structures and systems, by understanding the individual as part of the process and the system thereof.

2.3.3. Globalisation and transformation

The discussion of the interpretivist-constructivist and structuralist perspectives contains a potential understanding of the dialectics between development, modernity and transformation theories in relation to globalisation. These lenses all provide a perspective and an understanding of the contested and comprehensive nature of transformation purposes, mainly to address the oppressive and othering values in South African society. These perspectives refer to an understanding of the influences of concepts like globalisation, modernisation and development as an understanding of transformation. The influences of globalisation on the democratic changes in South Africa are not discussed enough since it is “difficult to determine” (Scott, 2000:4-5). This assertion refers to the pursuit of global competitiveness in higher education. This occurs through the “marketisation” of higher learning, while ex-colonial powers still linger and dominate in the globalised capital market (Scott, 2000:2-5).

Globalisation does not have a precise definition as a concept itself (Held *et al.*, 1991:1). Globalisation as a phenomenon is based on diversity and integration. This refers to the global integration of economic, social and political markets to societies around the world. However, globalisation as a concept is still challenged in terms of providing insight into contemporary human conditions, without downplaying the varying cultures and identities, as well as social patterns (Held *et al.*, 1991:1-14). Therefore, Held *et al.*, (1999), identified in this globalisation debate three conceptualisations of transformation, namely the hyperglobalist thesis, the sceptical position and the transformational thesis.

For hyperglobalists, contemporary globalisation defines a new era, in which people are increasingly subject to the forces of the global market (Held *et al.*, 1991:1-14). The main trend is the denationalisation of economies through transnational networks of production, trade and finance. These also bring out new forms of social organisation which supplant traditional nation-states and replace primary economic and political units of world society. The much-debated assumption is that globalisation provides new forms of comparative advantages for the disadvantaged groups within societies, when most believe it will polarise society (Held *et al.*, 1991:1-14). This new ideology imposes a new sense of identity, which displaces traditional cultures and ways of life, therefore a new global civil society emerges. This occurs often at the expense of the Global South and reproduces class struggles.

The sceptical position argues that globalisation is essentially a myth (Held *et al.*, 1999:10). According to sceptics of globalisation, a select few countries are segmenting the global society. These few countries are primary architects of internationalisation and thus would argue that a new form of Western imperialism is evolving. Groenewald (2000:24) argues that this internationalisation has rapidly grown the marginalisation of many Third World states as trade and investment flows towards the rich North and intensifies the exclusion of the rest of the globe. Held *et al.* (1999) and Groenewald's (2000) analysis of globalisation shows that globalisation contributes to the advancement of fundamentalism and aggressive nationalism, as witnessed by the Trumps presidency and the xenophobia in Asia and South Africa.

The third of the three positions on globalisation and perhaps the most important for this study, is the transformationalist position. The definition of transformationalist globalisation is the unprecedented and profound change conceived of the historical and interconnected patterns of societies across the globe. The conviction is that globalisation is the central driving force behind the rapid social, political and economic changes that are reshaping societies and the world order (Groenewald, 2000: 25). Held *et al.* (1999), conceives globalisation as a powerful transformative force, which has been responsible for massive shakeups of societies. As such, it is not clear whether such powerful transformative forces have yielded more negative or positive transformations.

Thus, in defining transformation, a widening and deepening emphasis on the different discourses and the transitions experienced through history by diverse societies is crucial. These perceptions of fundamental change, in a globalised sense, state that state institutions, market institutions and cultural institutions are becoming harder to distinguish (Held., McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 2000:171). As a result, the discussion on transformation has been increasingly analysed at a macro-sociological level, without a focus on the global changes and influences on global transformation (Groenewald, 2000:17). Therefore, it is the perception in this section that transformation in South Africa follows the existing trend of the Global South, importing social, economic, political and cultural identities to mimic global West transformations.

Kolodko (2003:208), contends that globalisation, as a phenomenon, is as old as civilisation and has through centuries deepened and broadened. This evolving concept redefined the nature and influence of globalised transformations. The argument therefore is that individuals are at times unaware of said influences of globalisation on their lived experiences. Transformation from a global societal perspective refers to the way society and culture changes (Castles, 2001:1).

This backdrop emerges from communal to associational relationships at the dawn of the 19th century. During this time, the development of Africa was to mimic the growth of Europe as the world became interconnected and dependent on one another. These connections occur due to the transitioning from an industrial to a modernised era. Furthermore, the connections exist as the global societies became more information-based and information-driven type of societies. These knowledge societies formed the social construction of the post-industrial era without borders, hence the interconnectedness of the world at large (Groenewald, 2000:17).

Social transformation fits into the idea of globalisation in society, since on its own, it represents both a micro and macro phenomenon (Barnhart & Barnhart, 1982). The implied assertions of these authors are that globalisation affects interpersonal relationships as much as it affects international relations, hence the agency-structure dichotomy to represent that micro-macro phenomenon. This is argued by Cury et al., (1997:42), to be the Great Social Transformation (GST). Curry *et al.* (1997), identifies GST as a major qualitative change in social relations in societies as it transitions from

being predominantly communal to predominantly associational. This perspective has not drastically changed over the years, as communities continue to develop and become more modernised. Communal societies are characterised as personal relationships, habitat commodities and non-bureaucratic institutions, while associational societies in contrast are characterised by functionalist societies and formal social units, such as organisations and institutions as well as the formal bureaucratic systems that flow from it.

Zamaraeva (2014:1705), asserts that the argument in Curry *et al.* (1997), presents a belief that globalisation “is not a unique and linear process but a differentiated phenomenon composed of certain areas and cooperation in political, economic, social, and cultural changes around the globe”. In this regard, the relationship between transformation and globalisation is referred to as “global transformation”. In the last decade, this concept of transformation as a global process has been understood as narrow or broad. The definition of global transformation is twofold. Firstly, it is the significant structural changes towards the digital era, which offer incremental or radical change in modern society. The narrow process in contemporary South Africa is currently experiencing a post-modern informational era (via the internet and media). The broader process refers to the real (cultural, social, economic and political) world dimension between different countries (Zamaraeva, 2014:1706). The broad meaning of global transformation is the system of social, cultural, economic and political changes developing in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

Therefore, social transformation can be seen as dialectically linked to globalisation. Castles (2001:1) argues that, in a dialectical sense, social transformation is both an integral part of globalisation as well as a process that undermines its central ideologies. The ideologies undermined by the West were always centred around the Global South changing its values and norms and adopting the Global West's imprint on growth and development. Hence Rostow's five stages of growth (Rostow, 1959). This is referred to as a model informed by the modernisation theory. This theory predicted that such ideologies and norms would lead to changes in demographic behaviour (a decline in fertility), political culture (the emergence of democracy) and social patterns (reduced social inequality through a trickle-down of the new wealth). However, by the 1960s,

inequality and poverty in the Global South and East deepened and the gap with the Global West and North growing.

In conclusion, it can be stated that globalisation is linked to the context of higher education transformation. The assumed “recognisable curriculum” disguises the intended universality and internationalisation of higher education institutions. Globalisation in this context only serves to reproduce the inequalities of the broader society (Yates & Young, 2010:6; Lockett & Shay, 2017:50-51). Therefore, this study acknowledges the severe structural constraints caused by globalised higher education. Moreover, internationalisation from the perspective of nation-states towards the world can address many of the structural injustices of globalised knowledge systems (Lockett & Shay, 2017:51-52).

As a result, this dissertation argues for a university concerned with the development of common but contextual knowledge systems. The intention is to produce a common and contextual national culture resulting from the realities and values of South Africans, simultaneously addressing the distinct social issues in South Africa (Yates & Young, 2017). Therefore, globalisation has taken away the ability of citizens and governments to learn how to “do” rather than always “knowing how”. This practice only limits the flexibility to avoid boundaries, creating industry and producing a competent citizenry. It is the position of this study that the perceptions of students at the NWU consist of globalised social factors about transformation in higher education.

2.4. Modelling perceptions of transformation

In knowledge-based societies, novel models have been used in forming an understanding of a phenomenon that conventional models have neglected (Dzisah & Etzkowitz, 2007:32). This section outlines the model consisting of the personal, political and practical in a form of spheres on transformation. The purpose of a framework of three transformational spheres is aimed at showing a transition from two-pronged-models of the 19th century, which only focused on industries and government and not include the university and the latter transformations of the 21st century. The intention of this section is to show that transformation through these spheres is a relatively equal, interdependent, multi-faceted and interacting practice. The understanding of transformation through the

different spheres and what each contains, offers an understanding of the process of transformation.

The model places an emphasis not only on the interaction, collaboration and external linkages, but also on the methodology likely to be used. It represents a need for a radical departure from the conventional development models towards a more applicable approach. Conventional wisdom has ignored or neglected the sociological importance of the three spheres, by analysing them separately. Therefore, this section proposes a more inclusive system, which is relevant for considering student perceptions on strategies, cultural practices and policies for transformation (Dzisah & Etzkowitz, 2007:32). The addition of the personal sphere makes it possible for students' perceptions of transformation within higher learning to play more than just a residual role in the development and transformation of universities in South Africa.

The transformational model is inspired by the proposed innovation model for the development and transformation for higher education in Africa, as proposed by the African Technology Development Forum (Dzisah & Etzkowitz, 2007). The model has different starting points. The different spheres of transformation operate differently and at times independent from each other. Additionally, any sphere can trigger a transformation by directing and influencing another. Dzisah & Etzkowitz (2007) asserts that the current trends support a model of transformation of which the spheres are operating autonomously and overlap without much distinction in purpose and not entirely merged to emphasise the importance of each sphere.

This study appreciates the sociological explanation that transformation is related to agency and structure, which changes with elements that cause change (Khondker & Schuerkens, 2014:4). This model attempts to show conditions and factors that cause a particular movement in society from one situation to the next. As a result, different spheres contribute differently to transformation events or processes. For instance, the elements of which transformation originates arise from the personal sphere as well as the political sphere, while the practical sphere offers the characteristics of what the final situation of transformation processes will be characterised for higher education. This model displays the aspects a transformation ecosystem comprises with structure and mechanisms for different actions.

Therefore, this model adopts a three-sphere framework that takes into consideration the past, the present and future transformations of societies at a meso-macro level. The second consideration of this model is the characteristic elements of development within social systems (Khondker & Schuerkens, 2014:4). These considerations offer two critical elements in studying transformation. The first is the diversity of elements and factors that are affected or affect transformation practices. Diversity in this instance refers to the developments (positive or negative) in any system, adding factors or elements to a particular transformation focus. According to Teune and Mlinar (1978:35), diversity refers to the distribution of characteristics of the sum of a systems elements.

Secondly, a transformation model is dependent on how the diverse elements and factors are integrated. This means that the elements and factors integrated could result in positive or negative forms of transformation. The distinguishing fact is that integration in reference to transformation refers to the probability of success in a particular system, caused by the unity of added elements intended to cause change (Teune & Mlinar, 43). The importance of the integration of perceptions of students in the element's factors of students at the NWU is found in this integration processes. This means that the "stability" of transformation within a particular system rest in the integration of all the factors and elements affected. If all factors and elements are in continuous developments, rigidity is no longer possible. Transformation occurs when a system allows for the addition of components in a system and the capability of such a system to integrate these components.

Therefore, transformation in this instance would mean a move towards trilateral interactions. This implies a move away from a model of government and higher education industries on transformation projects to a three-sphere model of personal, political and practical spheres in transformation within higher education institutions. Therefore, the interrelated nature of the personal, political and practical spheres provides a meaning to transformation processes that can begin at either sphere, with the locus being the perceptions of students. The potential of this model lies in the diversity of student perceptions and integration of said perceptions as an ever-renewing source of new ideas on institutional culture, student life and teaching and learning. This study implies that institutions of higher learning have a high rate of inactive students. As a result, they are

not able to participate in maintaining and forming of new ideas on transformation processes and transformation phenomenon.

In this sociological approach, transformation is related to the structure that changes and the elements that cause this change being diverse and integrated (Khondker & Schuerkens, 2021:4). The three spheres in this study make up some of the important factors of the core business of universities. The personal and political spheres act as the origins of any change, as mentioned, but within society, organisation and institutions. The practical sphere represents a measure of said transformation policies.

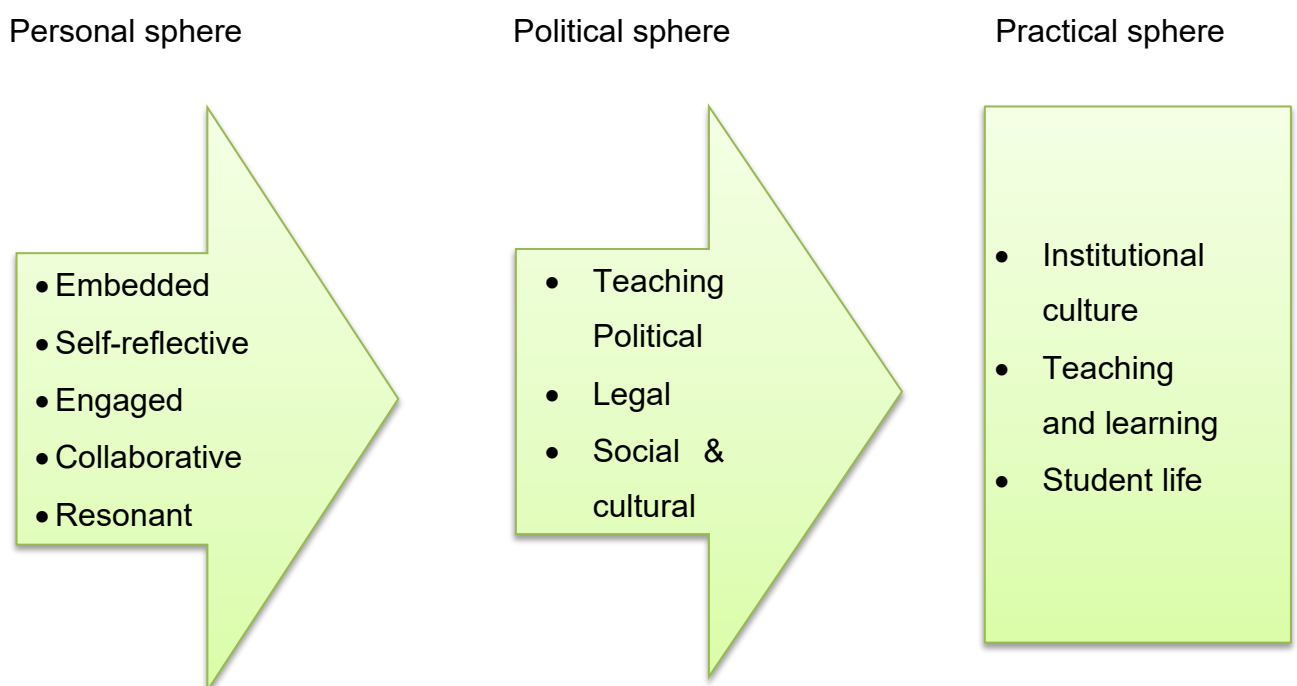


Figure 2.1. Explanatory model of transformation (Mcwabeni, 2022)

Therefore, the features on which the study is modelled revolve around three spheres. Within the practical sphere, there are five nested levels of consciousness. These levels display the different roles and levels of which students can be involved in transformation. The particular interest of these levels is the role of the person in a larger society with transformations, developments and changes. The use of social consciousness in perspectives of transformation is to understand the individuals' experiences in relation to their engagement with "new environments". This means that one is set to be conscious of how other people's experiences influence them, in addition to their embeddedness to social, economic, politic or cultural factors and as a result, realise whether they have a place or not in a particular social realm and the reason thereof.

Therefore, in the personal sphere, which encompasses the discourses of transformation arising from the individual beliefs, values and worldviews, the five nested levels of consciousness is displayed by Schlitz, Vieten and Miller (2010). The first is the embedded consciousness which is shaped by cultural and social factors. The embedded consciousness refers to the passive socialisation of consciousness from biological, cultural and social factors. This refers to factors outside the control of the agent. For instance, the relationship the individual has with others' beliefs, values and social attitudes. Additionally, the embeddedness of social consciousness revolves largely around the migration of individual consciousness into different social realms.

This Bourdieu (1987) interprets as power relations in society, shaping lived experience and subjectivity. Societal factors like the economic, social, political and cultural influence agency. Simultaneously, the ongoing relationship between the self and society could, in this case, represent the ongoing dialectic that will forever cause transformations, developments and changes. Lastly, the embeddedness of this approach offers expansive prisms to personal or collective identities (Appadurai, 2008: 53).

The second refers to being self-reflexive and how the environment shapes your own experiences and your knowledge of it. This level arises from the realisation that societal factors can limit consciousness awareness, by causing human brains to exclude information that does not agree with their current meaning systems (Chabris & Simons, 1999). If the information does not confirm the theory, it is often treated as an error (Dunbar, 2014:100). Therefore, the objective in this level is to be conscious of how individuals are conditioned. The purpose of reflecting on the self is to gain perspectives by making a cognitive shift in how they perceive, code or use information retained (Gardner, 2006:5). The significance of this level is seen in how one can enculturate beliefs and change or modify their belief systems. This level is important when it comes to unlearning or overcoming cognitive roadblocks, to allow individuals to adapt and grow.

The third factor refers to engaging with difference, resistance and bringing change. Examples of this on the campus are race-week conversations, protests on fees and service delivery and voting for r SCC/SRC members. In this level, individuals are more aware of their own perspectives and biases as well as that of the institution. As a result, their capacity to respond consciously to the social world becomes possible. Moreover,

the engagement with the social world arises from an understanding that a person's social system has an embedded history and changes over time. At this level, awareness is no longer passive but turns into engaged action. This level supports and endorses an activist's mentality coupled with shared beliefs and relationships on a common goal.

The fourth refers to collaborating to co-create change when shared experiences form connections and networks. Collaborative consciousness refers to a process when self-reflexivity engages difference. At this level there is already a platform where individual action can spark a collective conscience to participate in co-creating solutions to differences. Although there is no pro-active culture in this regard at the NWU, the potential to collaborate remains high. This study serves this purpose by investigating the perceptions of transformation at the NWU to ensure stories are told and that challenges persist. Another example of this process remains the collaborative effort to create a unitary institution now known as the NWU. Lastly, resonant consciousness refers to the human ability to resonate experiences of one another to form a common understanding. This feat is only plausible if the chosen society (i.e., NWU) shares a common goal, respect and a coordinated effort to respond to challenges.

It is important to note, however, that these spheres do not occur in order and can be triggered at any of the three spheres. The second factor refers to the political sphere. In this paradigm, systems and structures define the constraints and possibilities under which the practical transformations take place and the form in which the different spheres interact (O'Brien and Sygna, 2016). This phase includes the political, economic, legal, social and cultural systems. In this sphere, power and influence is negotiated through social movements, collective action campaigns and interests are protected etc. Ultimately, it is here where solutions and challenges are addressed. It is in this sphere where transformations at practical levels occur or not. This sphere also involves the management of transformation systems.

Lastly, the practical sphere, where transformational strategies, practices and behaviours are active. This sphere measures the outcomes of the observable policy objectives of transformation. It is within this sphere that the technical changes occur, involving teaching and learning, institutional culture and student life in the context of this study. These are the core functions of higher education: namely, institutional culture, teaching and learning

as well as student life. This is where the outcome of transformation resides for this study. These three elements inform the research study with regards to the key nodes of transformation or the challenges thereof. This means that these three elements lead the universities mandate to reform, within a system, rather than in isolation.

For instance, traditionally perspectives of transformation in higher education have always been in relation to the why (apartheid) and the how which refers to policies (modalities and rationales) with relation to transformation (Luescher & Tumubweinee, 2019:2). This dissertation focuses on the on the locality (the where) of transformation in higher education. The NWU, PC represents the physical social environment of students. In this study, the NWU, PC represents the social realm of students in transformation, space in relation to student experience and the nature of student life as a sub-system to experiencing higher education (Hillier & Hanson, 1984:27). Space in this case brings together a student life that groups different histories, personalities, identities, worldviews and cultures, to exist as diversity.

In conclusion, this model requires an understanding of a few important points. The first is that the elements within the spheres are not fixed. This relates to the fact that agency and structure are always changing. Hence the perceptions of students at the NWU. Diversity in this model is only plausible if there are signs that phenomena, institutions or organisations are growing. Diversity in this perspective is a sign of development. The more the diversity, the more the growth, the more integration needed. Additionally, these elements form part of spheres that operate in the form of a model. These spheres are triggered independently and can be triggered from any perspective. The more factors in need of integration the longer the process of transformation. The less factors integrated, the more likely there will be negative transformation events.

Lastly, the perceptions of students in transformation are influenced by and exists in, as well as occurring through the three spheres. The model is both objective and subjective. In this case, the personal sphere (agency of NWU students) is the more subjective while the political and practical spheres are more objective (NWU representative, staff, management, culture, etc). This model assumes that the perceptions of students on transformation occur as they unconsciously navigate their habitus and position themselves within the NWU. This unconscious positioning becomes conscious when the

individual feels rejected within a particular habitus. The task is argued to be the possibility of structure to accept, adopt and enable agency to connect the individual's history, home and individuality to their new reality (university). Therefore, perceptions of students confirm or deny whether they, through their agency, have been allowed to perceive, contribute and understand their new habitus by structure. This objective, although intended for the NWU, is also applicable to transformation in higher education worldwide. The section to follow is especially aimed at offering an interpretation of global transformations in higher education which involved students.

2.5. Transformation in higher education worldwide

Although education is universal, higher education institutions should be considerate of context, however the universal influences. In this section, the discussion is focused on that point. In the 1960s, several transformations started to occur that shaped a different reality within societies in the USA, Mexico, France, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Italy, Brazil, West Germany and Japan (Mitropoulou, 2011:1; Kazuko, 1968:430). The distinctive feature of the decade became the series of intense and violent political protests and confrontations initiated by students and youngsters. As argued by Marwick (2006 in Mitropoulou, 2011:2), the most significant and impactful of the decade's protests occurs in 1968, as students who initially displayed no interest in politics and who were resistant to radical Marxist ideals at the time, engaged in protest movements against the authorities and above all, the police who were seen as actors of illegitimate force. These student movements were described as a collective action against totalitarianism and absolutism and were aimed at promoting equality at almost all levels (Flacks, 1970:345).

Student movements as a concept are defined as a sustained, concerted action, exerted by a group or groups of students, opposed to the existing system or systems of power (Kazuko, 1968:430). Higher education across the globe has always been an institutional hub of fundamental transformations. Proof of this is implied in the decade termed the "long sixties", where protests occurred with no coordination but common characteristics (Schildt & Siegfried, 1990:48). This is referred to as movements with a global character, although there is no global coordination. Student movements intended to prove that they wanted a better present, future and liberty.

These global protests in higher education drove higher education into a situation of instability and ambiguity. Globally they demanded governance that protect human rights. After the 1960's protests these demands evolved. As such, higher education institutions had to align with the changing requirements of the global society. Globalisation, therefore, required an integrated world economy that considers international societies as functionaries in this regard. As a result, certain corners of academia felt that the advantage or advocacy for a globalised educational economy has proved its importance. This importance is argued as the addressing of higher education quality between countries and continental regions. The result, a need for a new model to assess and evaluate education in a global context. This perception was used to evaluate education in a global context, as not ignorant or naïve to the attempts to universalise education without context or autonomy from have-not states. The lack of leadership prevents universities from diversifying and transforming their roles for economic growth and the application of new information and knowledge (Olsen & Maassen, 2007).

These development models raise many concerns from a transformation perspective. For instance, in the developing world and emerging economies, global policy developments like Europeanisation, University rankings as well as the Global faculty mobility initiatives are created to foster competitive and recognisable policy transformations through open border policies, to impose faculty mobility initiatives (global faculty partnerships for research and development). However, these global efforts to universalise the University have instead paralysed local and national epistemic features (curriculum) in higher education. Higher education globally competed and thereby promoted Western or Northern principles in higher education and access to the global economy of knowledge production (Marginson & Wende, 2007:45-62).

Part of the destabilisation of higher education through globalisation is explained by the rapid flow of commodities and capital, ideas and institutions, practices and people in a world of unprecedented transnational connectedness and competitiveness (Zezeza, 2005:2). African universities are drawn into these unprecedented changes, which are transforming the triple missions of teaching, research and service. The university has become more pluralistic as expectations of access and accountability have risen, while the university simultaneously loses its monopoly of knowledge and the public support diminishes (Zezeza, 2005:2). This notion applies mostly to the external issues of higher

education caused by globalisation. The challenge of internationalisation is driven internally by the growing complexity of knowledge and externally by the increasing commercialisation of knowledge. The interconnectedness of universities economically and epistemologically affects the institutional positioning and reconfiguration of objectives within higher education institutions (Zezeza, 2005:3-5).

The implication of said ideas disadvantaged Africa in two ways, firstly education in Europe and North America is designed to achieve similar goals, thus the convergence of higher education structures in the European Union since the year 2000. This means graduates can work anywhere in the EU. Secondly, the convergence of higher education structures further alienates Africa's authority, competitiveness and context in participating in a knowledge economy. The lack of leadership through Africa's Trade Agreement fails to actively pursue a higher education that is comparable among the standards of quality higher education and the creation of knowledge beneficial to the internal goals of the African continent. This relates to effects of internationalisation of higher education on Africa's curriculum (Majee & Ress, 2018: 4).

Mense et al., (2018:47) argue that globalisation of higher education has forced higher education into a new world of change (knowledge production means policies between countries must realign), instability (the educational, political and economic gap per continent or within countries that make this process challenging) and ambiguity, which is shaped by an integrated world economy. Marginson and Wende (2007: 13) proclaims that these changes in global transformations carry varying implications for nation-states and government institutions of higher learning, as global processes are often integrated into university curriculum, though they are distinct from the national curriculum.

Additionally, globalisation in higher education has redefined what time and space means to the industry (Scott, 2000:7). This phenomenon refers to how distance learning and online learning are becoming popular and making the physical space (University campuses) redundant, also, online learning has no sovereign border. Although new forms of access are created, the university remains a privilege. This reflects the permeable nature of politics and the market; online learning still faces the challenge of ensuring these transgressions is better addressed (Scott, 2000:7). These transgressions affect the transition of curricular (gendered specialisations) and the transformation of many

universities in progressive bureaucracies. Finally, the influence of globalisation is that the university finds itself in danger of losing its traditional function of teaching and research. The university is moving towards a more branded corporate identity, to compete with virtual universities and private firms creating independent curricula and register as universities (Scott, 2000).

Globalisation, in this context, is defined as shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information, communication technology and the emergence of international networks, which are beyond the control of higher education (Mishra, 2013; Altbach, 2016). This occurs as the rapid changes in technology, politics, economics and the accelerating production of knowledge make the management of said changes imperative, however inconsistent with the social and cultural evolutions within regional and national societies (Richardson *et al.*, 2018:47). Like transformation, globalisation systems drastically change either over time or in a short space of time, therefore, globalisation in higher education embodies an ecosystem that influences change and quality in higher education.

The argument of a failed curriculum for Africa is due to the varying quality in higher education between countries and regions, as well as the internal stakeholders in the higher education institutions. The ingenuity in higher education to accomplish internationalisation, has compromised quality in Africa for a globalised higher education system (Hunter & De Wit, 2017). De Wit and Jones (2012:50) argue that, although there exists no model for internationalisation, it is still driven and considered in terms of a Westernised, largely Anglo-Saxon, predominantly English-speaking paradigm. Majee and Ress (2018:4) state that very little research is aimed at understanding and conceptualising internationalisation from the context of the historical particularities of colonisation. As a result, a conclusion can be offered as mid- and low-income countries continue to mimic and prioritise Anglo-Western forms of curricula, thus offer no intellectual record of internationalisation at home (De Wit *et al.*, 2019).

As argued by Marwick (2006, in Mitropoulou, 2011:2), student political protests are not limited to students who are politically inclined. As already argued in the section above, the conscience of transformation within higher education as a habitus, occurs when rejection of one's doxa and capital in a particular habitus is felt consciously. From this

perspective it is clear to see how higher education institutions over the years have always been seen as fundamental to transformations (Schildt & Siegfried, 1990:48). It is important to note that negative transformations are also part of the discourse on transformation with the same objectives and intent. The section to follow discusses a few aspects of how the apartheid era in South Africa represented such a negative transformation within higher education through discrimination.

2.6. South African higher education transformation

The policies of apartheid were those of exclusion in South Africa. Therefore, in efforts to redress the effects of these policies, race, class as well as gender equity and equality became significant for measuring change (Ladd & Fiske, 2014:40-61). As a result, all policies of transformation are derivative of the constitution of the republic of the Republic of South Africa, the Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997. This occurs as the apartheid government deliberately disadvantaged one race over another, making the next logical step for government affirmative action policies for higher education to address these social injustices (Van Wyk, 2006:185). Transformation policies often have different approaches but similar objectives. The merger of M.L Sulton Technikon and Technikon Natal into the Durban University of Technology was focused on addressing the historical, sociological, academic, financial, and political disparities of the past (Chetty, 2017:149). The University of Pretoria (2023:20), has an approach to transformation that is based on diversity, submissive cultures and the degradation of silos in institutional culture. It is different from the NWU as it intentionally advocates for a transformation consciousness. The SCC Chairperson at the NWU, PC adheres to this approach of degrading silos. This interpretation is just not visible in the NWU transformation goals.

As mentioned above, the landscape of higher education institutions was characterised by a hierarchy of racialised higher education and the marginalisation of black students (NCHE, 2022). In 1995, the National Conference of Higher Education (NCHE) was formed. Thereafter, in 1996, the NCHE designed and reported their policy framework for transformation in higher education in South Africa. In this report, the central focus was establishing a higher education system that is coordinated, but not uniform nationally (NHCE, 1996). The Education White Paper 3 stated that this coordinated system of higher learning should ensure diversity to offset homogenisation (DoE, 1997:2.37). To ensure

this system works, funding programmes were offered to ensure quality higher education (DHET, 1997).

Additionally, this framework of transformation in higher education should focus on economic and social development through the acceptance of more students. This marked the beginning of the massification of higher education institutions to increase access. This development is backed by the Education White Paper 3 of 1996. This White Paper was used as a basis to adopt the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. Policies promoting increased student access to higher education worldwide has been highly associated with the massification of higher education, thus the concept of "Aggregation". Aggregation or statistical affirmative action practices refer to the collecting of data based on a required quota (characteristics proportional of the population that policies protect and empower) that is to be reported as distinct sets of data for governance and state use (Ford & Patterson. 2019:103). In this study, the quantitative aggregation is utilised as an aligning measure to transformation in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status of the students at the NWU, PC. Additionally, the use of the concept "aggregation" is to argue its obfuscating characteristics, in that it promotes the notion of transformation within universities based on how data is interpreted (Ford & Patterson, 2019:8).

The Education White Paper 3 offers a programme for the transformation of higher education. The idea behind this document is to offer a transformed, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist higher education system. Additionally, the White Paper seeks to offer non-discriminatory access, while eradicating past inequalities (DHET, 1997:14). Moreover, higher education institutions, through teaching and learning as well as research, should develop means of growing and developing the economy of South Africa. The most important of the objectives in the White Paper is creating a knowledge system relevant to South African challenges and globally competitive. This programme aimed at achieving these objectives, through supporting the democratic ethos, culture and human rights of all stakeholders.

Jonathan (2001:44) argued that the support of said policies are due to the inequality and exclusion of Black people and women in higher education. These realities resulted from a history of coloniality and apartheid in South Africa. The inadequate education system had served its purpose as a tool for social control. These inequalities were exacerbated

by the apartheid policy of Bantu Education. Bantu policies denied quality education and access to quality education to Black people in higher education institutions. However, addressing the crisis is divided into financial and cultural redress to create a new South Africa (Jansen, 1990).

Thus, from this perspective, Pandor (2018:30) and Nzimande (2010:1) argue that transformation as a process, rests on overcoming racial divisions and confronting deeply interrelated challenges of class, culture, gender and youth mobility within society. Inequality, exclusion and segregation during apartheid resulted in universities offering quality education to one race and not the other (Jonathan, 2001:44). Furthermore, the demand of redress for past injustices and the scale of social stratification in society and higher education institutions demand measures that go beyond the mere formal discrimination in access and processes of empowerment (Jonathan, 2001:44). As a result, the government and the department of higher education adopted a progressive affirmative action legislation and policies (White Paper on Higher Education, Green Paper on Higher Education and the Higher Education Act of 1997) to increase support for the previously disadvantaged students and women (Pandor, 2018:32).

2.6.1. Curriculum perceptions of transformation

Education existed in South Africa before the arrival of the Dutch colonists in 1652 (Jansen, 1990:1). This form of education was mostly oral and led by traditional elders, to transmit knowledge and culture from their lived experiences to those of the newer generations. The more formal education system began with the Dutch colonists and was largely characterised by racial segregation and unequal provisions (Seroto, 1999:18). Molteno (1984:46) observes that racial segregation and educational inequalities for Black people in particular date back to the era of Dutch colonial rule. This culture continues right through British rule and reigned into the National Party governance of South Africa's education and society.

To this point, the patterns underlying the rationale of the education systems since the early settlers were largely based on the transitioning of political ideologies during these historical periods, which fostered the othering of races (Molteno, 1984:46; Seroto, 1999:18). Consequently, these education systems, which focused on subjugating black people by spreading "civilisation", only succeeded in creating a legacy of superior and

inferior knowledge. Additionally, it created superior and inferior students, which are reproduced through the quantile system adopted in South Africa (Behr, 1984:175;236; Soudien, 2012). The consequences of quantile systems (a system of ranking schools based on the unemployment and literacy levels of a community) in high schools, as well as the private and basic curriculums, emphasise the decline in the quality of incoming graduates in universities. These challenges have become latent frameworks of how to create inferior and superior students or rather monitor and regulate inequity and inequality. Thus, this section argues (Mallows *et al.*, 2020) that the structure of higher education curriculum exists as a place of struggle between positive transformation or perpetuating negative (bias and unequal processes of change) transformations.

Pedra (1997:51 in Mallows 2020) further argues that as an epistemological project, the curriculum structure should intend to problematise ideas, but with a certain form of logic and method. Mallows *et al.* (2020) attests that, like the oral forms and the more formal systems of education pre-and post-colonialism, the curriculum is synonymous with cultural artefacts. As a result, it is crucial in constructing identities, implementing and transforming social relations for the liberation of youth through systems of enculturation. Thus, the ontology of students of the structure of the curriculum is central to how they make sense of their own reality and the ability to comprehend the dynamics involved in creating another reality (Vorster & Quinn, 2016:5).

According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:17), the major problem of the 21st century is that of the epistemic line. The difference between the colour line and the epistemic line is that since one denies humanity to individuals and the other denies the epistemic virtue to produce and own knowledge. Thus, the narrow understanding of what a curriculum transformation is to an institution or the individuals that comprise it arises from a particular failure of institutions of higher learning. These failures refer to the faculties which fail to centre Africa or Africanism as a unit of analysis in creating knowledge and globalising African knowledge. In particular, the humanities.

The challenge, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018:18), is that universities do not differentiate between academic freedom and epistemic freedom. Academic freedom refers to the institutional autonomy and academic rights to express diverse ideas, including those critical to authorities and political leaders. Epistemic freedom is much

broader and deeper. Epistemic freedom speaks to the cognitive, it draws attention to the content of what we are free to express and on whose terms. Epistemic freedom is about the democratisation of knowledge, which is against the overrepresentation of Eurocentric thought in social theory and education, which is foundational to curriculum transformation.

Epistemic freedom means the absence of discriminatory practices on the grounds of sex, race, gender, religion and politics, as well as the right to teach without predetermined orthodoxies (Bozzoli, 1974). Bozzoli (1974) concludes that academic freedom involves the freedom to publish and pursue academic studies that are deemed congenial. Moreover, the editorial committee at "The Open Universities in South Africa" (2013), asserts that this definition arises as a contrast to the classical conception of academic freedom. With epistemic freedom, universities and academics have the right to determine for itself, on "academic grounds", who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught and who may be admitted.

Moreover, there is no cognitive justice shown in the content consumed in institutions of higher learning and on whose terms, it is consumed or expressed (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018:18). Cognitive justice is defined as the diverse ways of knowing by which human beings across the globe make sense of their existence, thus the ontology and epistemology of lived experiences. It draws attention to what it is we are free to express and on whose terms. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) refers to this as epistemic freedom. He asserts that epistemic freedom represents the democratisation of knowledge, from being universal and nationalistic to its plural pieces of knowledge, which represent its shared characteristics.

In this study, the curriculum is viewed as an important dimension of transformation. Curriculum transformation refers to fundamental changes to academic offerings of institutions of higher learning, namely, profound epistemological, ontological and methodological moves that ensure a transformation agenda (Maistry, 2011:118). In South Africa, the nature of this kind of transformation is quantitatively and qualitatively different. This implies that the former Bantustans produced agents and citizens of change in all their unique habitus. These individuals walk into the social realm of higher education with a different collective approach to the ontology, epistemology and methodology of higher education. Therefore, in investigating the perceptions of transformation through these

ideas and in considering students in the process, one can ensure a value-based curriculum based on the three approaches, which have been preferred over the years in curriculum formation and implementation (Mpofu & Maphalala, 2018:4).

The first of these approaches is a traditional approach to educational curriculum inspired by the work of Emile Durkheim. The purpose of this approach as argued by Jones (2009 in Mpofu & Maphalala, 2018:4) is the deliberate transmission of indigenous knowledge, which is explicitly focused on principles and ethics to assist learners in conforming to the status quo (societal norms and rules). In the second approach, an ontology and epistemology constructed to represent a value-based curriculum as a more progressive approach (Thornberg & Oguz, 2013 in Mpofu & Maphalala, 2018:4). In this approach, the focus is on the reasoning and the personal judgements arising from the discourses influenced by the students' lived experiences, within a particular society. This refers to the dialectics between having to adjust to a new society and the capacity to be autonomous, without compromising the existing doxa within a certain environment. The final approach to a value-based curriculum refers to the critical nature of the reasoning of students. The critical approach motivates learners' involvement in political and social issues. According to Thornberg and Oguz (2013), this approach allows students to contribute to and engage with the events that happen in the environment they find themselves in.

Thus, in elucidating these approaches, the intention is to emphasise the possibilities of why and how students feel alienated. This refers to the nature of the academic knowledge produced, which are imported and lack context to the circumstances they exist in. Although European scholars like Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) argue that academic discourse is no one's first language, thus systems of acceptance need to be created for students to accept new ways of learning, the content in what is "new ways of learning" is in question. In so saying, the issue then becomes, how do we ensure that new forms of knowledge are appreciated without the need to be validated by former colonisers?

The alienation of students in the South African university arises as curricula are not responsive to the realities and problems experienced locally (Turner et al., 2019:1130). Grosfoguel (2007:214) argues that, although the Western and Northern traditions in curricula have emerged to become powerful knowledge systems, they do not consider or

credit other worldviews or certain forms of knowledge and where they originate. Therefore, the epistemological diversity in higher education needs to be intensified, by bringing marginalised groups and their knowledge systems as well as worldviews to the centre, while complementing Western knowledge in the epistemic and academic efforts to transform (Turner *et al*, 2019:1130). Lastly, the pedagogy and classroom practices in higher education need to be renewed within different faculties. The institutional culture of openness and critical reflection exposes the subliminal practices of the hidden curricula, which are prejudiced to certain cultures and systems of knowledge.

In conclusion, what is in question is the equity students have at present for their future and the information and the education they consume. This section aimed to elucidate whether the current models of restructuring and commoditising education, due to the global trends in higher education, have benefited South African higher education institutions and the students who inhabit them (Mense *et al.*, 2018:52). Therefore, as part of the perceptions of transformation in this study, the quality and relevance, as well as environment of which higher education in South Africa exists, is vital. This study seeks to understand the position of students with regards to inter alia decolonisation, curriculum compatibility and the quality of education. This understanding for the purpose of this study is contextualised to the context of the NWU, PC in section 2.7 below.

2.7. Background of transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus

Perceptions of transformation in this study place value on the triple spheres referred to as dimensions of transformation. The early beginnings of the PU for CHE are linked to Afrikaner nationalism after the Anglo-Boer war, to transform the lives of Afrikaners as a collective from cultural, economic and social "ills" post the war (Pretorius, 2017:40). This nationalist's performance was led by the Gereformeerde Kerkgenootskap (Reformed Church), Afrikaner Broederbond (currently known as Afrikanerbond), the Federasie vir Afrikaanse Kultuurorganisasies (FAK) and the Ossewabrandwag (OB) leaders, who were anti-Britain and later anti-English. Some of these leaders became members of the National Party, to translate these ideologies into action.

Therefore, the Reformed Church started a theological seminary in Burgersdorp in May of 1869 (Kamsteeg & Wels, 2012:92). Simultaneously, the Synod promoted a broader vision, to not only train ministers but also teachers and thus began processes on the 29th

of November 1869, to design programs for said objectives (Van der Schyff, 2003:9 in Kamsteeg & Wels, 2012). The anti-Britain and anti-English vision were centred around religion, education, culture and politics, to anchor Afrikaans as a language of sciences and inevitably to create institutions to protect Afrikaans and Afrikanerdom's cultural assets (Pretorius, 2017:40). These assets were symbols and values of Christianity that eventually were editorialised as synonymous to Apartheid values and principles (Pretorius, 2017:46).

In 1905, the seminary moved from Burgersdorp to Potchefstroom, due to the relationship the theological seminary had with Abraham Kuyper, based on shared spiritual ideals, as stated by Jan van der Berg, as stated in Pretorius (2017). Between the seminary and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VUA), in the Netherlands influenced by Jan Lion Catchet and Dirk Postma, the reformed principles of VUA were strongly supported by the members of the seminary, due to the fact that Calvinism was more likely to thrive in South Africa than in the Netherlands (Van Deursen, 2005:19-22 in Kamsteeg & Wels, 2012).

In 1913, the Theological Seminary opened to other disciplines, since the South African government would not solely fund church-related education. Moreover, gender transformation was demanded by the government, which saw Helena Petronella become the first female student to enter the Theological Seminary in Potchefstroom (Van Deursen, 2005: 171). In 1919, the Theological Seminary became the "Potchefstroom Universiteitskollege voor Christelijk Hooger Onderwijs" (PU for CHE) and in 1951 it was officially granted independent university status.

Due to the association of the PU for CHE with the apartheid regime policies, the relationship with the VUA could not continue, thus on the 17th of August 1976 the VUA cut all ties with the PU for CHE. Although it would seem prejudiced to generalise and assume all Afrikaners subscribed to the initial stance by the PU for CHE, it is important to recognise that ignorance implies complicity in the perpetuation of nuances related to such ideals, which presents a challenge to achieving transformation from the constructivist's stance.

Over time, some transformations were introduced at the PU for CHE (Pretorius, 2017:46). For instance, the acceptance of students and staff was not solely based on religious affiliation. Secondly, although the PU for CHE was a nationalist institution with Christian

values to defend and grow Afrikanerdom (Pretorius, 2017:46), Black and Indian students were allowed to study at the PUK unconditionally from 1987, but graduate in absentia (Pretorius, 2017). This occurred due to the political nature of the funding model of universities in the era of apartheid. Therefore, transformation at the PU for CHE relates to the dismantling of right-wing Christianity and nationalist politics that was engrained in the "culture" of the NWU.

2.7.1. Towards a transformed PU for CHE to a new NWU, PC

The democratic election of 1994 saw Nelson Mandela being elected as president and the ANC taking the Republic of South Africa into a new era of democracy. This brought an end to a regime personified by far-reaching policies of injustice and inequality (Kamsteeg & Wels, 2012:93). In this time, the new millennium began with far-reaching, radical changes led by the then Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal. This included the merging of universities. The idea was to merge previously disadvantaged universities with more equipped and well-capacitated White universities.

The reasoning behind this initiative was based on the objectives of the government to address issues of fragmentation, lack of access, duplication and to improve the quality of education in certain parts of South Africa (Kamsteeg & Wels, 2012). Therefore, the predominantly Black University, formerly known as the University of the North-West (UNW) and before that, as the University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO) and the predominantly White University formerly known as the PU for CHE were merged, although 205 kilometres apart geographically. Ideologically it was also quite different institutions. The PU for CHE also had a campus at Vaaltriangle, 88km from Potchefstroom.

Furthermore, South Africa adopted Affirmative Action as one of its guiding policies and institutionalised it with the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. Besides equity, the Act explicitly refers to implementing policies of affirmative action. More importantly was the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, which precedes the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. The act was mandated to address processes of establishing transformed higher education institutions and their functions to pursue the determination for transformation post-1994.

Transformation of higher education, therefore, had to be in line with this equity legislation and requirements, as an important factor for transforming higher education institutions in South Africa. The conversation thereafter was of a journey towards an educational system that serves equality and quality education, hence the merger of universities in South Africa. The vision was to link institutional restructuring of the HE system to social redress (Prinsloo, 2016, Kamsteeg, 2008).

Kamsteeg & Wels (2012:94-95) describe the PU for CHE as an academic stronghold of apartheid that obediently served the White clientele of the Transvaal, who were politically conservative. In contrast, the UNW, formerly known as the University of Bophuthatswana (UNIBO) served freedom orientated students in an institution established as a separation of academic teaching in different homelands (Prinsloo, 2016). When the merger processes began, the UNW was a marginalised institution (it was seen as a product of the homelands and not a strong independent institution of higher learning). This occurred at the turn of democracy in South Africa, when the Bophuthatswana government were terminated and funding dropped, as well as the capital flight of staff after its reincorporation into South Africa in 1994 (Fiske & Ladd, 2004).

The diverse ideologies of the two main campuses (UNW and PU for CHE) were a challenge to the transformation of the NWU. In 2008, it was reported in the Mail and Guardian (2014) that the new university was unmanageable and essentially still existed as separate universities because of said ideologies. Additionally, another challenge was what identity the NWU would adopt as a unified institution of higher learning. There were two options: the NWU could start from a clean slate or continue the existing campus models but under the same roof. For the Potchefstroom campus this option would mitigate the threat to the campus brand, "PUKKE" (Pretorius, 2017:114).

A further challenge in the merger was which campus would carry the institutional office. Pretorius (2017:142) argued that staff at the former UNW "felt they could not match their counterparts in terms of technical competence to implement the merger". They felt marginalised and disenchanting by the new NWU. This led to labelling the merger process as "Potchefication", the term used to describe the "dominance of the Potchefstroom campus during these processes" (Pretorius, 2017:142-144). In time, the word

Potchefication was used to question and label merger processes initiated by the institutional office at the Potchefstroom campus.

The initial retaining of the campus cultures presented a challenge to Black students at the Potchefstroom campus since continued with Afrikaans in teaching and learning as well as in residence cultures. This disadvantaged Black students. Black students inherited social and economic disadvantages stemming from historical oppression and did not feel at home at the Potchefstroom campus, in contrast to the White students. Therefore, the intent in section 2.8. is to interpret transformation at the NWU.

2.8. Interpreting transformation at the North-West University

Transformation at the NWU went through three phases, where the mandate on each is rather different. Transformation at the NWU is centred around the three vice chancellors since the merger discourse began. Therefore, this section illuminates these three phases, through inter alia information collected through discussions had with the vice chancellors to know what their relationship to transformation were and how it affected their strategies.

Dr Eloff's era (2004-2014) at the NWU is characterised by the forming, connecting and incorporating of the different higher education institutions (UNW and PU for CHE) into a single entity offering higher education. Therefore, his role in transformation was a "mandate by government to successfully restructure higher education in North-West based on shared values and purpose" (Eloff, 2021). Thus, Dr Eloff's era of transformation as a mandate, offered the constituencies of the NWU a new dawn for higher education in North-West. This mandate involved maintaining good teaching-learning outputs at the NWU and reduce dropout rates through the universities. Additionally, improve the research outputs on all campuses, improve levels of innovation and community engagement as well as maintain the financial viability and investment in staff as per the Employment Equity of the NWU.

Furthermore, the mandate emphasised that the transformation goals of the NWU were to redress (infrastructure, buildings, services); equity (not just overall numbers, but specific levels) and the normalising of student experiences in all campuses (Prinsloo, 2017;166). Hence a more managerial transformation concept, which prioritised governance and management as compared to the culture and convictions of staff and students. Dr Eloff's

relationship with this dual transformation process was mostly around “resources and infrastructure” as well as “services and teaching and learning on all campuses” (Eloff, 2021).

However, the interview with Dr Eloff was characterised by the legacy he provided the NWU. The interview revolved around transformation at the NWU beginning with his term. He focussed on what a successful transformation at the NWU would look like. He considered a change of culture at the NWU as something that he envisioned should occur at the end of his tenure. This refers to focussing on the merging of three universities into one. Dr Eloff was more in favour of a federal model than a unitary model to transformation.

The decision in this study to consider his tenure as the “merger phase” and Prof Kgwadi’s as the “unitary phase” of transformation at the NWU was met with some resistance. In his words “the university was united when I left”. To clarify the statement, an explanation of the model was requested by the interviewer to create a pathway to the same question of what “unitary” in this sense means and implies. Dr Eloff stated that, for the purpose of accounting for the costs of mergers, geographical motives and cultural experiences was the reason why a federal model was adopted. This model mimicked, in certain parts, the banking models of the early 2000’s. This branch banking model meant that the NWU will provide all three core functions in higher education through different campuses, but with the PC as the “head office”.

Dr Eloff’s tenure was a genesis of transformation for the NWU. Therefore, everything occurring after the merger is a continuation of a process that began with his tenure in the year 2004. Additionally, Dr Eloff felt that the suggested methodology in his managed definition was better suited for the NWU as opposed to the “unitary model” by Professor Dan Kgwadi. In his opinion, he felt that the “unitary model” is not a transition but a continuation of what was already being done by Dr Eloff, as the proposed and adopted strategy during the merger. To Dr Eloff, this model ensures that there is one head office with three campuses, each with its own brand, based on standards and outcomes decided by management and council. In this manner, campus culture is protected in a form where it is not symbolic or ideological.

Since 2010, the definition of transformation has always been managerial. As Pretorius (2017:258) reports, Dr Eloff, who was considered more of a technocrat, was concerned

with the managerial aspect of transformation rather than the academic aspects. He emphasised transformation as a series of measurable outcomes based on compliance and performance indicators. As such, transformation was accepted in 2010 to be as an urgent, fair and well-managed process of fundamental and sustainable change, to address inequalities and the needs of the country and all its people, by empowering people through quality education, research and the implementation of expertise in the context of South African higher education (Pretorius, 2017:258).

However, Dr Tufvesson was the opposite and perhaps a more controversial proponent of transformation at the NWU. Dr Tufvesson was appointed as the Executive Advisor for Transformation and Diversity in 2011. Her belief as an academic and an activist was that transformation goes beyond just policies and statistics. Transformation, according to Dr Tufvesson, required every employee and student to engage and pursue it (Prinsloo, 2017:258). Furthermore, transformation is much about the everyday experiences of those who constitute its spaces as much as it is about the measurable. It was inclusive of policies and the well-being of students who engage forces of change every day.

This interpretation of transformation was however challenged by the council and Dr Eloff himself by stating that "this person (Dr Tufvesson) should not have connections with the campuses" - this referred to "Dr Eloff's management and governance structures" (Pretorius, 2017:258). The NWU was seen to be pushing out staffers, who were seen as "difficult". This included the transformation manager, who prioritised the participation of students in the process of transformation (Pretorius, 2017: 259-260). After the Nazi salute and the death of Thabang Makhoang during the orientation of students at PC, the statements made by Dr Tufvesson in relation to how a "minority student by the clear symbol of his colour is not missed" began to echo in council, which resulted in the appointment of Prof Kgwadi (Pretorius, 2017; Prinsloo, 2017). Prof Kgwadi's term as VC was from 2014-2021.

After Prof Kgwadi's appointment, he emphasised the idea of transformation (Pretorius, 2017:21) at the NWU as a unitary merger model and a transition of Dr Eloff's tenure. Dr Eloff felt this approach was an attempt to undermine the legacy of Dr Eloff. Dr Kgwadi believed that "transformation is like a tree, the consequence of this simile is the impatience of expecting it to offer shade during its infant years" (Kgwadi, 2021). What Dr

Kgwadi meant in this instance is that the tree takes time to grow, so its shade can be used to bask. The same mentality should apply to transformation as a journey and process that is time consuming and cannot be forced. The mandate, therefore, by the Senate was to see a unified institution which is still stable financially and see the core functions protected. Prof Kgwadi explains that there was a need for unity and diversity. He stated that the “lack of diversity in terms of culture and worldviews breeds connotations of a proxy for race” (Kgwadi, 2021). He asserted that this proxy for race is linked largely to language. Hence, the low participation of non-Afrikaans speaking students at the PC, while there is a difficulty in attracting Afrikaans speaking students to the MC or ensuring their participation on the VC.

Additionally, the realisation observed in the literature by Prinsloo (2016) and Pretorius (2017) was that the value of “unity” sincerely had to occur over time. For instance, the Dr Eloff era was more about creating a new university. Thereafter conversations of merging campuses and culture could occur, hence the unitary model. As a result, the merger project placed its focus more on the unity of the institutions and less on the unity of cultures and identity within the NWU. When probed on this observation, Prof Kgwadi mentions the “hidden advocacy for homogeneity” in terms of race and presumably culture at the NWU. His concern was around the resistance of heterogeneity in the above-mentioned factors in higher education institutions.

And this potential fate will “draw” society into a loop which might make it seem as if South Africa is not a transformed country. This refers to not representing the true nature of higher education institutions post 1994. These concerns arose at the NWU from the events that led to the resignation of Dr. Eloff. Prof Kgwadi believed that the most important thing to universities, before its core business, is transformation. Transformation perceptions is what drives the narrative that markets the NWU to students in high school to join the university.

To accomplish this, Prof Kgwadi argued for “unity” across campuses. When probed, Prof Kgwadi asserted that this approach “allows for each campus to offer a particular service which promotes diversity and ensures the equality in resources, particularly in niche courses and also divide the top three sporting codes across campuses” (Kgwadi, 2021). Therefore, what had to change was the “management structure, equity in distribution and

student life” (Kgwadi, 2021). Prof Kgwadi asserts that the management model had to change in a sense that all campuses became “delivery sites” for the NWU and move away from the proposed “head office approach”, which demanded every campus should share a name but keep the same management structure (Kgwadi, 2021). The approach was still managed but better at addressing the sub-cultures of the NWU and ensure one culture out of the many sub-cultures at the NWU.

Dr Bismarck succeeded Prof Kgwadi in 2022. He is the current VC. In his term, a third phase of transformation can be expected. Dr Bismarck emphasised that transformation is a process that “should not seek to reproduce inequality based on race or culture” (Bismarck, 2022). Dr Bismarck believes that transformation should be resistant to homogeneity. This implies more diversity and access for growth. Dr Bismarck believes that the current definition of transformation at the NWU should be more multi-disciplinary. This implies that, in considering the historical evolution of lived experiences through general education on social issues, this enculturation should be included in more disciplines. Lastly, transformation should seek to offer access to everyone despite race, class or gender, by creating an infrastructure that is inclusive of all cultures local or foreign.

Therefore, when analysing the three conversations with the Vice Chancellors, one can sum it up as follows. Dr Eloff’s tenure was mandated by government to create a singular institution from three very different universities. In the process establish the core operating functions for the institutions to be competitive and functional. As a result, the strategy was more towards the structure forming the system of a higher education institution. In Dr Kgwadi’s tenure, the mandate was the merging of campuses. This refers to ensuring that there is a common culture and equal participation in the project, the NWU. Therefore, Prof. Kgwadi decided to ensure that all campuses are delivery sites for the NWU. As a result, a singular identity was created, for instance, a blazer with one colour, a student card that looks the same. Dr. Bismarck’s tenure is relatively new. However, the assumption of this study is that the objectives are to improve and intensify the existing frameworks through innovation.

In concluding on this study, the following is important. Dr Eloff’s era, like that of Prof. Kgwadi, as the VC of the NWU, was the most important phase for the NWU. This era of

transformation at the NWU was more of a mandate to create a successful NWU project. The merger of the NWU was the only evidence one can have of a true “drastic or radical change” in the lexical definitions of transformation. The perspective therefore was that this era of radical and drastic change was more federal and mandated. This was the first blueprint of transformation at the NWU. Dr Eloff was the Vice Chancellor to taste the depths of struggle in creating an NWU for the North-West. In the era of Prof Kgwadi, the focus was more on the hard challenges of transformation. The delivery of an “NWU product”. To address this challenge, the blueprint had to be adapted. The focus during the era of Prof Kgwadi was on creating a unitary model that considers both the core business of the university and sub-cultures thereof.

2.9. Conclusion

Transformation as a phenomenon is rather old. However, since there are not many debates on transformation solemnly as a higher education phenomenon, this point will be stated differently. For instance, the earliest transformations in society, in the era between the late Hellenism through to postmodernity, is used relatively in this study for its focus on culture and transcending nationalists’ boundaries. From the literature review done in this study, context became important for transformation. This context arises from the perspective that transformation appears differently in many of the discourses it is used.

Therefore, transformation in higher education has been occurring since the 19th century, following the resistance to political ideologies. Therefore, in section 2.6., the focus was on how transformation in higher institutions a new phenomenon is not and not limited to the politically inclined. Additionally, this section displayed how many of the patterns of the long sixties has not changed but occur under different circumstance. Moreover, it displays how higher education has always been a habitus for transformation for higher education institutions, through students who are not a factor in the managed process of transformation.

The context of this study arises from the transitional period from an apartheid led regime to a democratic republic of South Africa. This socio-political shift from apartheid South Africa to the new democratic republic brought with it the need to merge previously disadvantaged universities with the more advantaged universities. For this study, this

merger included the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and Vaal triangle campus merging with the University of North-West.

Therefore, transformation in South African higher education began through the NCHE in 1995 to begin a process of redress in the higher education sector in South Africa. Through the Education White Paper 3, the concept of diversity was introduced to break political, social, economic, ideological and cultural boundaries caused by homogenisation in higher education in South Africa. Lastly, this section (section 2.7) addresses the critical challenges of higher education. These relate to the latent and manifest functions of massification in higher education, as well as the quality in access.

The massification of higher education across South Africa created varying factors for transformation at universities in South Africa. One of these factors refers to the geographical locations of the campuses of the NWU. This unique characteristic also means that the NWU has one of the most diverse portfolios of students attending the university. As a result, the worldviews, beliefs, politics, history, dispositions, etc migrate with them across South Africa to the NWU. Therefore, perceptions of transformation would then arise across the varying factors occupying the NWU habitus. Despite this rich potential for in-depth inquiries, there is still a lack of scholarly work on transformation from this perspective at the NWU. As a result, this study places its focus on the student perceptions of transformation at the NWU.

This section begins with varying lexical definitions of transformation to come to an interpretation appropriate for this study. These lexical definitions in section 2.2 are summarised in Table 2.1. Therefore, the initial interpretation of transformation at the NWU based on these lexical terms is as follows: transformation refers to processes that are managed to completely change the structure, character or functioning of South African institutions. The purpose of which is to address the injustice practices of the past and inform new gestures in higher education institutions.

Section 2.2.1 leads into how these interpretations are conceptualised in South Africa. Therefore, the literature reviewed within the section asserts the following. Transformation in higher education relates to issues of non-racialism, equity, access, equality, support and efficiency. Additionally, higher education transformation needs to be responsive to educational justice and epistemic freedom. Lastly, a transformed institutional culture with

improved systems in demographic profiles and new constructs of race, gender, culture and community embeddedness.

Section 2.3 places emphasis on the lens this study employs to understand, explain and interpret transformation. Interpretivism in this section offers knowledge on the complex, multi-layered and interdependent factors influencing student perceptions. The focus therefore was on understanding, meaning, knowledge interpreted or constructed through metaphors. Moreover, this section (section 3.1) also outlines the interconnectedness of the phenomenon through how structuralism is interpreted in this section. Within structuralism, are the three spheres employed in this studies model. These include the personal sphere, the political and the practical sphere. Additionally, this section also discusses the impact and influence of globalisation on the student's interpretation of transformation. These global perspectives are important to South Africa as a developing nation but is still dependent on global ideas and context.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction to research design and methodology

The previous chapter attempted to provide an in-depth and descriptive synopsis of the meaning of transformation in this study, the application of transformation in higher education and a framework to analyse transformation. This chapter addresses the method of research used in this study. This study utilised both qualitative and quantitative epistemologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

This chapter discusses firstly the complexities of researching transformation. Second, the main paradigms of social research are discussed, followed by the research methodologies in the study. This entails the quantitative aspects of the study that are described, followed by the qualitative aspects of the study and the respective research designs. These methodologies constitute the mixed methods approach, which is the approach chosen for this study. Thirdly, a description of the empirical research techniques is provided.

In this study, the location of the research is the NWU in the North-West, South Africa. The quantitative research is conducted among undergraduate students of the Potchefstroom campus; the qualitative data phase is among the SCC and SRC members on the three campuses. The sampling approach for these groups are discussed. Additionally, the general research ethical considerations, the clearance process, the data analysis process and the limitations encountered during the execution of this research are discussed.

In sum, the chapter attempts to substantiate the selected methods and empirical processes of this study. This is achieved particularly by addressing the mentioned research question in section 1.3: “what is the applicable research methodology to study the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU, particularly at the Potchefstroom campus”.

3.2. Researching transformation

Research on transformation and in particular transformation in South African higher education is challenging. This challenge relates to the demands of defining transformation contextually (Wittmayer & Holscher, 2016:4). Research on perceptions of transformation

is not immune to this ambiguity of the concept, “transformation” (Wittmayer & Holscher, 2016:4). Thus, research on transformation in higher education institutions is challenging due to the concept’s fluid meaning, but also because of the resistance of institutions who practice transformation to come to a consensus of what the fundamental characteristics of transformation in higher education is.

The WGBU (2011) argues that over the years, this conceptual ambiguity has led to the concept of transformation losing its analytical and normative value. The #FeesMustFall and the #RhodesMustFall movements are examples of the result of the ambiguity of the concept and how its meaning is affected by societal systems. This ambiguity makes it difficult to provide an analysis of whether change is fundamental and thereby transformative. At the NWU or institutions of higher education in South Africa, transformation is viewed as a managed process of change. This is largely conducted to comply with policy strategies to legitimise its societal position. Therefore, the complexity of working with such a concept must be recognised.

Moreover, transformation and transformation in higher education cannot be perceived as a non-constructivist concept, or that the meaning is void of its context within society. This challenges the analyses, understanding, conceptualisation and researching of transformation. Students’ perceptions are but one aspect of transformation and this is not necessarily linked to the managed process of transformation. The students’ perceptions on the institutional culture, teaching and learning, as well as student life are largely constructed and therefore dynamic and elusive. However, Wittmayer and Holscher (2016:4) argue that the exclusion or the tendency to overlook perceptions of students (in this instance), disarms the benefits of a case study on transformation. Therefore, to address this challenge, this research study uses a mixed-method approach.

3.2.1. Research paradigms

A paradigm is a conceptual framework directing the research process. As a result, the researcher needs to provide a basis from which the research is to be understood and directed. Additionally, the researcher needs to provide an understanding of what kind of knowledge and information is needed and how the information is gathered for data analyses purposes (Tracey, 2013:38). Paradigms differ and often it is based on how knowledge and reality are defined and thus they are briefly discussed (Masenya,

2018:42). These paradigms are namely, positivism, constructivism, participation and pragmatism, which are acknowledged for their value to the choices made by the researcher.

3.2.1.1. Positivist paradigm

Positivism is defined as an approach to research that is rooted in principles of the natural sciences to investigate social phenomena (Masenya, 2018:42). Positivism represents a traditional form of thinking about social phenomenon and is mostly linked with quantitative research; in that it upholds the notion of an absolute truth. In addition to this belief of an absolute truth, positivists believe that this approach to research is critical, as it keeps the research objective and separate from the influence of human interaction (Denscombe, 2008:274). This approach was later challenged by post-positivism (Masenya, 2018, Bryman 2012:618-619).

Moreover, positivism posits that the concepts and knowledge within a certain phenomenon can only be validated through experiments, observations and with the aid of measurement instruments (de Vos *et al.*, 2011:47, Sarantakos, 2013). As such, knowledge is a result of verified facts established through observations and examination of social phenomenon. In positivist's research, theory cannot be separated from practice and therefore a top-down approach is adopted. This implies the hypothesis is deductively derived from scientific theory for empirical analysis (Masenya, 2018:43). Additionally, this study provides no hypothesis for the quantitative phase of this mixed-method study.

3.2.1.2. Constructivism

Creswell (2013:65) defines constructivism as a research approach where participants seek a better understanding of the world they live in. This form of thinking applies an inductive process whereby theoretical explanations are created after social interactions are observed (De Vos & Deport, 2011:49). A constructivist approach bases its argument on certain assumptions. The first of these assumptions is that individuals create their own realities to better understand the world. This paradigm is linked with qualitative assumptions that claim that empathetic and rich descriptions in data are only possible through the realities captured in this approach. Reality to constructivists is subjective and created by the individual (Quinlan, 2011:96). The second of these assumptions is that

knowledge is obtained through the lived experiences of the participants as well as their interactions with a certain social phenomenon. The individual's experiences represent unique meaning, thus subjective knowledge. For this study, the constructionist's paradigm was also utilised.

3.2.1.3. Participatory paradigm

The participatory paradigm is also referred to as the transformative paradigm, since it is change orientated (Heron & Reason, 1997:278). In participatory research, researchers argue that the participants are involved in every phase of the research process. This involves the formulation of the problem to the inquiry and analysis of data collected as a result. This research often occurs in relation to phenomena like poverty, racism and gender discrimination and is often used in studies with political objectives, which are a result of factual incidents. Factual incidents refer to the insistence by the participants to directly participate in the research study, since the phenomenon directly affects them and in real time (Strydom, 2011:492; Chesler, 1991:761; Riley & Reason, 2015:170, Park, 1992:30; Chambers, 1994:2). The above scholars all imply that transformative or participatory research is both deductive and inductive. As a result, the nature of knowledge through research and reality thereof is multi-faceted. Strydom (2011:496) claims that this approach is often associated with mixed-method research. This study is not directed by the participatory paradigm, but it is noted here to highlight the specific setting of this study.

3.2.1.4. Pragmatic paradigm

Cresswell and Clark (2011) argue that pragmatism is a set of notions which include mixing research methods or research strategies. This occurs whether the research process is normative or an improvisation, as per the demands of the study to analyse and understand complex or multifaceted phenomenon. The idea is that as much as reality is multi-faceted or dependent, it is also singular and independent of factors in society. These realities are open to inquiry on the likelihood of it being practical to solving problems (Masenya, 2018:46). Pragmatism abandons the notion that one must choose between one paradigm and the other or one research methodology and the other. It gives the researcher the freedom to move within the bounds of research to reach a beneficial end to research practices. Pragmatism is linked in most cases to mixed-methods research.

This study is not directed by the pragmatic paradigm but is mentioned to highlight the setting of the study.

3.3. Research approach and designated designs of the study

The difference between qualitative versus quantitative research methods are mostly demonstrated by means of comparison. Onwuegbuzie (2003:395) refers to parallel comparisons such as objective versus subjective, impersonal versus personal, deductive versus inductive reasoning and generalisation versus uniqueness. Mixed methods use a combination of these characteristics.

Mixed methods are not firstly concerned with the nature of the method used but the purpose of which it is employed (Sarantakos, 2013:47). Therefore, any stage in the research process can be mixed, depending on the type of mixed methods used at a particular stage of the research process. Additionally, the context of which the study is conducted also determines the use of mixed methods. This is done to accomplish a more holistic and clearer answer to the phenomenon being investigated.

Within this section, the discussion begins with the quantitative research characteristics and what its approach entails. Additionally, the researcher alludes to the research design chosen for this methodology by discussing briefly the cross-sectional design. Moreover, the quantitative methodology is followed by the qualitative discussion, as it has been throughout the study. As with the quantitative section, the research design for the qualitative discussion is offered through the case study. Lastly, the discussion closes with mixed-method discussion and its relevance to this study, as well as tabling the mixed-method types and the one's relevant for this study.

3.3.1. Quantitative research

This section of the chapter explains one of the methodological approaches that was employed for the empirical investigation. Quantitative research is regarded as the organised inquiry about social phenomenon through the collection of numerical data and the execution of statistical, mathematical and computational techniques (Slevitch, 2011:76). It uses descriptions like statistics, facts, figures, science, logic and objectivity as an attempt to uncover truth (Loubser, 2017:20). Quantitative research is aimed at

testing theories, determining facts, demonstrating relationships and ensuring objectivity, generalisability reliability and validity (Van der Merwe, 1996; Weinreich, 2009).

Quantitative research adopts a positivist approach to research, which focusses on observable and measurable phenomena in society, leading to the production of generalisations. Positivism considers “pure data” as important to eliminating human bias in social research, by excluding individuals within society as primary stakeholders to research (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:41). Positivism in its purest form sees any social entity as a physical object or natural phenomena. Epistemologically, the research focuses on discovering facts or regularities, which are observable and measurable for the purpose of developing credible and meaningful data. Therefore, the data collected aims to be descriptive or find causal relationships between the data collected and generalisations developed to understand the studied behaviour from a quantitative perspective (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020:41).

However, the metatheory used in this study is post-positivistic. Post-positivism refers to an approach to research which believes that reality cannot be known perfectly. It asks for a methodological openness (Crotty, 1998:40). Post-positivism attempts to do this by analysing data with an understanding that participants’ experiences can differ and not be considered as “untainted and unbiased facts” (Loubser, 2018:13). The concern for post-positivism is a reasonable and measurable degree of pluralism, which balances out the positivists and interpretivists approaches that believe there is no absolute truth (Panhwer, Ansari & Shah, 2017:253). In this study, quantitative research is used to explain the phenomena, transformation, through using questionnaires and statistical models to analyse said themes. For this study, quantitative data was collected through measurement instruments as the phenomena being studied is not natural.

3.3.1.1. Cross-sectional research design (survey)

In quantitative research, the cross-sectional design was deemed suitable. As argued by Levin (2006:24), a cross-sectional design refers to studies carried out at one point in time or over a short period of time. Bryman (2016:59), states that a cross-sectional design is often called a survey design. The study occurred between 2022 and 2023. The quantitative survey was carried out in 2022 at the PC due to the Covid-19 delay in 2020 and 2021. The quantitative phase of focus groups for the study occurred in the period

September, October and November of 2022 and follow ups in 2023 for SCC and SRC members of 2022. Further interviews were conducted in 2024 followed by the analysis of the Qualitative data. Bryman (2016:59) defined it as a design interested in variation among cases. To accomplish the said variation, data must be quantifiable to identify statistical patterns. Neuman (2014) described survey research as a collection instrument for quantitative research which encompasses questionnaires and/or interviews as instruments of survey research.

A survey reflects a snapshot of a scenario at a given point using structured questionnaires to gather quantitative data. Surveys should not be confused with questionnaires or thought to be synonymous. A survey refers to a methodology for gathering data, describing data and explaining information from samples to construct a quantitative description of a population (Slattery *et al.*, 2011:831). It is designed for the collection of primary data. Survey data can be reported in a variety of forms depending on the objectives of the study or the categorisation of the data, based on the chosen design. Questionnaires refer to a specific tool or instruments used in a survey to collect information through a series of questions referred to as items (Slattery *et al.*, 2011:832).

Since transformation is a contemporary phenomenon, this research design complements the objective of the study. In this research study, a survey is used to investigate the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU, particularly the Potchefstroom campus. The purpose thereof is to capture the variety of perceptions on transformation in this social realm, in the context of higher education transformation. This research design is useful in bringing clarity and understanding to the unique perceptions of transformation (Bryman, 2016; Levin, 2006).

3.3.2. Qualitative research

This section deals with the perceptions of SCC and SRC members on transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. As this study follows an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, the qualitative research follows on the quantitative research to accomplish the objectives stated for this study.

Qualitative research is differentiated from quantitative research by the fact that the subject matter of the social sciences is elicited (which is the social world and people in the social

realm) epistemologically and ontologically differently (Bryman, 2016:399). Krathwohl (1998:230) argue that qualitative research is naturalistic as it explores peoples lived experiences and has, as a point of departure, the inherent truth that there are multiple realities to any phenomenon despite the social realm in which they occur.

The theoretical foundation of the qualitative approach is based on three ideas. The first is constructionism, which is concerned with the fact that there is in practice neither an objective reality nor an objective truth (Sarantakos, 2013:37). Constructionism is more focused on realities and relationships that people have with other people, objects or abstracts, which may exist outside of people's consciousness until meaning is attached to it by individuals. The approach to reality in constructionism is centred on the fact that there are three levels of reality. Firstly, reality does not exist in a frozen state, therefore it is recursive and reflexive. Secondly, the individual and collective generation of meanings occurs through the social interaction of people or the influences of historical and personal experiences (Sarantakos, 2013:39). Therefore, the most important object is the role of culture and society in generating meanings. This third aspect of constructionism also refers to socialisation as a process of sharing information about meaning. Additionally, interpretivism, which is grounded in Max Weber's concept of *Verstehen* (understanding) of social life, implies an interpretive stance as contrasted to *Erklaren*, which means explaining. The focus for the researcher is the mode of production of social structures within the ecology of social issues.

Moreover, qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena as opposed to proving hypotheses (Stake, 2010). The main objective of qualitative research is not only to study phenomenon from the perspective of the participants being studied, but to also report on those experiences, descriptions and interpretations of their realities in a quest to develop or create theories (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2016:399).

McDonald (2012:34) asserts that a qualitative approach would include methods and techniques such as the documentation of results, analysing, observing and interpreting meanings as well as the forming of meaning structures of human phenomena and social issues being studied. This predilection for studying experiences and seeking to probe every level of experiences are often accompanied by the challenge of rendering research too subjective, difficult to replicate or generalise and thus the presumed lack of accuracy.

Therefore, in the context of qualitative research the accomplishment of trustworthiness is valued highly (Bryman, 2016: 400-406).

Qualitative research is embedded with features which are central to the advantages of using this methodology. The first and probably the most important of these features is the fact that it is naturalistic. This refers to the fact that it is undertaken under a natural setting, with the researcher and participants urged to have no preconceived ideas or any pre-structure models, which may limit the scope or operation of the study. Additionally, it is subject centred, thus making it easier to change at any point in time, meaning it can be used with a proportion of flexibility. As a result of being a more subjective and holistic approach, qualitative research is usually at a very small scale and communicative.

However, like any research method, qualitative research has its own limitations. Pfeifer and Benini (2000) in Sarantakos (2013) argue that the most common criticisms of this method are geared towards the size of the sample, which is usually small, thus does not fully represent the population studied and therefore cannot be generalised. Additionally, there are questions on whether the methodology produces accurate results on relationships between variables in a study of a particular phenomenon. However, it must be noted that the phenomenon studied with its context is relatively new. The reasons given were based on the “lack” of objectivity, which arises from qualitative research being a more relaxed research procedure (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006:772-773). This research paradigm is therefore criticised since the studies conducted qualitatively “do not” ensure reliability and validity. This could mean the studies conducted qualitatively cannot be replicated. However, in this research study, the inclusion of this qualitative phases is crucial to determining the perceptions of SCC and SRC members on transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

3.3.2.1. Research design: Case study

According to Yin (2014:1), a case study refers to a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries and context are not clear and the researcher has little control over the phenomenon or context”. In sum, a case study is an empirical activity which addresses, through the investigation of cases and their context, the why, the whom, the how, the when and the where, in terms of the phenomenon studied (Yin, 2002:14).

The nature of this case study is, firstly, more instrumental than intrinsic. An instrumental case study is used in that it is a follow up of the quantitative research to fill in the gaps therein (Rule & John, 2011:8; Luck, Jackson & Usherm 2007:13). The case study is therefore usually chosen for an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. The phenomenon is often scrutinised in terms of its context. Secondly, the case study is explanatory in that it aims to not only investigate a particular phenomenon, but to also explain the circumstances or problem that requires investigation between real-life issues in our society and the institutions embedded in them. For example, the youth movements in South African universities in 2015 concerned themselves with some transformation issues addressed in this study (Yin, 2003; Joia, 2002:307). Lastly, in this study, the case study focusses on a single case rather than multiple cases. This asserts that the qualitative research endeavours to understand the perceptions of SCC and SRC members on transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

In conclusion, the case study in this research study is a value-added case to study. This opportunity presented in this study allows us to learn how SCC and SRC members at the NWU perceive, interpret and wish to see transformation practiced, from a vantage point of seeing both parties involved in student life and management. Additionally, the study would seek to understand the perceptions of SCC and SRC members on the managed process of transformation at the NWU and specifically at the Potchefstroom campus.

3.3.3. Mixed methods research approach

In this study, the use of a mixed methods approach is to ensure a proper gathering of facts for a valid and reliable measurement of existing perceptions of transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. These perceptions refer to the model presented in the previous chapter of institutional culture, teaching and learning, as well as student life and how they are linked to the phenomenon of transformation. These three factors are presented within the practical sphere in a broader model including the personal and political spheres of transformation.

In the mixed methods approach, a quantitative method is employed to gather information related to the measurement of the perceptions of undergraduate students at the NWU (Sarantakos, 2013:47). Among the quantitative measurement of the perceptions of undergraduate students at the NWU, is the inclusion of the qualitative method to study

the SCC and SRC's perceptions on transformation at the NWU across campuses. Masenya (2018:39) argues that the reason why mix-methods are used increasingly over the years is due to its potential to capitalise on the respective strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Therefore, to enjoy more flexibility in obtaining a broader perspective on perceptions of transformation, the study uses a mixed methods approach (Sarantakos, 2013:123). Mixed methods have been defined as a type of research design in which both qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in how data is collected and how data is analysed and interpreted. Research methods are used complementarily to conduct research through predetermined phases and procedures (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003:711). Additionally, mix-methods have been defined as "research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007:4).

Accordingly, mixed methods studies are classified into two streams, namely fixed and emergent (Azorin & Cameron, 2010). The fixed mixed methods study occurs when both quantitative and qualitative phases are predetermined and implemented (Creswell *et al.*, 2011). Alternatively, emergent mixed methods studies are those where a second phase (qualitative or quantitative) is added to the initial study design if the results in the initial study are inadequate (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). This is a fixed methods study. These classifications of mixed methods approaches are used either in concurrent studies where both qualitative and quantitative phases are applied at the same time, or sequentially where one phase is applied first and then followed by another. There are six major different approaches in mixed methods studies, which are summarised in Table 3.1. (Creswell & Clark, 2011) below.

Table 3.1. Mixed-method research types

Mixed Methods Type	Brief explanation
Convergent parallel design	Both qualitative and quantitative phases are implemented at the same time the study is started. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative phases run concurrently, yet independently during the study.
Explanatory sequential design	This design starts with the implementation of the quantitative phase, which builds up to the sequential implementation of the qualitative phase. The latter is used to explain the findings of the former.
Exploratory sequential design	In contrast to the explanatory design, an exploratory design begins with the qualitative phase to explore a certain phenomenon. The quantitative phase is implemented sequentially to test the extent of a phenomenon.
Embedded design	Embedded design is when both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed within a traditional quantitative or qualitative study. It occurs when a qualitative phase is added within a quantitative phase (e.g. experiment) or a quantitative phase is added to a qualitative phase (e.g. case study).

Transformative design	This refers to a mixed-method design created within a transformative theoretical framework. This theoretical framework allows researchers to reflect throughout the research process of events or changes relating to the studied phenomenon (Brown, 2004). This framework suggests that researchers first use a qualitative method to collect data on people, events and changes and in quantitative data collection can be used to capture data from available extant data sources (Mertens, 2012).
Multiple design	The multiphase design combines both concurrent and sequential phase designs. It uses an iteration of quantitative and qualitative studies that are aligned sequentially, with each new phase building on what was learned during the previous phase to fulfil the study's main objective.

(Masenya, 2018)

The approach taken for this study is referred to as the explanatory sequential mixed design, as the quantitative and qualitative methods occur chronologically. Questions or procedures of one method occur or are dependent on the one preceding it (Teddlie & Tashakkori,, 2009:27). Explanatory studies build on descriptive and exploratory studies which provide the “what, where when and how”, in which transformation is referenced in this study. Explanatory research goes beyond the “what, where and how” questions to ask “why” in trying to address the causes and reasons to why and how certain phenomena exist. The rationale behind using an explanatory sequential method is to gather the general understanding of a particular phenomenon within a research focus (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006:5). The qualitative process explains and adds more depth to the statistical interpretations of perceptions of transformation at the NWU.

Furthermore, it provides evidence to support or refute an explanation or prediction. For example, the quantitative results of the study may differ to the qualitative even though

they share the same theme with regards to questions asked. In essence, a sequential explanatory design draws quantitative results, which are either justified or refuted by the established relationship with the qualitative study (Boru, 2018:3). The sequential explanatory design is useful in this study to assess trends and relationships through quantitative data but also explains the mechanism or reasons behind the resultant trends (Boru, 2018:3). However, the research question leans more towards the qualitative principles to investigate the perceptions on transformation rather than the quantitative in this study. As a result, the quantitative survey serves to inform the qualitative data collection and analyses to create the parameters of how a particular phenomenon can be explored further.

3.4. Sampling strategies and sample size

Sampling strategies explain how decisions were made with relation to the samples chosen in the study and how the sampling was applied (Cant *et al.*, 2005:165). The section to follow discusses the sampling strategy with reference to the target population, sampling frame, sample size and sample methods. Like the previous sections in the study the quantitative discussion is followed by the qualitative discussion.

3.4.1. Sampling method

Sampling methods refer to the way the study sample is obtained (Cant *et al.*, 2005:165). Berndt and Petzer (2011) argue that sampling methods can be classified into two main categories, namely probability and non-probability sampling. These sampling methods are both divided further into different categories, or rather sub-categories. Like the previous sections in the study the quantitative discussions are followed by the qualitative discussions.

3.4.1.1. Probability sampling methods

In probability sampling techniques, mentioned in brief, the likelihood to be included in the population sampled for the study is known (Strydom, 2011:228). In other words, the likelihood of an individual to be selected in this study are known and calculated. The commonly used categories of probability sampling are as follows: simple random sampling, systematic sampling and stratified random sampling and cluster sampling (Gravetter & Forzano, 2003:118).

Therefore, simple random sampling is considered the ideal sampling method as everyone from the population faces a theoretically equal chance of being chosen for the sample (Quinlan, 2011:210). In systematic sampling, only the first individual from the population is selected randomly (Jackson, 2003:15). The individuals are selected based on certain intervals, which is reliant on a required sample percentage.

In stratified samples, the population is divided in mutually exclusive groups (Glicken, 2003:180; Berndt & Petzer, 2011:174). The purpose of this approach is to ensure that representation of the different groups is fair and equally distributed (Creswell *et al.*, 2003:229). Lastly, cluster sampling, which refers to a two-stage process whereby a random sample of clusters is drawn and a random cluster of elements within random samples is drawn until it is reflective of the population (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:162).

3.4.1.2. Non-probability sampling methods (Quantitative and Qualitative phase)

In non-probability sampling techniques, the likelihood of being selected for participation in the study is not known (Tansey, 2007; Zikmund & Babin, 2013:322). The common sampling techniques known to researchers are the judgement (purposive sampling) sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling and convenience sampling. Now that the first section offers the distinction in probability samples, this section delves into the sampling methods and techniques used in this study for both phases.

Judgment sampling is a sample that is selected purely based on the researcher's judgement of what elements best display the characteristics of the population (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:153). Judgement sampling is also referred to as purposive sampling (Strydom, 2011b:232). The second sampling technique, as asserted by Cant *et al.*, (2005:166) is the quota sample, which is usually used to identify different subgroups that closely resemble a population's characteristics. Quota sampling takes place when representative individuals are chosen out of a specific subgroup.

Additionally, there is snowball sampling. In this form of sampling, the initial participants are asked to identify additional individuals who have similar characteristics and would like to participate in the study (Strydom, 2011b:233). Quinlan (2011:214) and Creswell (2012:784) states that participants should be sampled until data is saturated or until no other individuals with similar characteristics to the participants are found. Finally,

convenience sampling refers to data collection from individuals that the researcher has easy access to (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002:19).

The convenience sampling technique of which Malhotra (2010:377) argues, is considered less expensive and less time consuming compared to the other sampling methods. Furthermore, Blackstone (2016:4) notes that convenience sampling is best used in exploratory research. Due to time constraints, the target population could not be randomly sampled.

As a result, this study applied non-probability sampling methods to both qualitative and quantitative phases. First, the **quantitative phase** applied the quota sampling method. In other words, in the quantitative phase, students were selected based on the representative quota of the population of the students at the NWU, PC.

Subsequently, the qualitative phase of the study implements a purposive sampling method. Thus, qualitative data was collected from students the researcher had access to and saw relevant to the topic discussed in the study. This approach means that no probability is attached to choosing the sample in the population (Surbhi, 2016; Lopez & Whitehead, 2013:124-125). As such, the probability sample implicitly represents the researcher's purposive selection of the study's population sample and thus not everyone has an equal opportunity to be part of the sample (Surbhi, 2016). This sampling technique is used in the data collection phase, whereby the researcher chooses a few people to interview based on a pre-selected criterion. In this case the SCC and SRC members were interviewed. The purposive sample is also referred to as a judgement sampling is designed to provide information-rich cases for an in-depth study (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013:125).

3.4.2. Target population

A target population refers to the individuals or groups to whom the study applies (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002:17). These individuals or groups share a general set of characteristics and are in possession of the information the researcher requires (Zikmund & Babin, 2013:312). However, if the study population is inadequately undefined the gathered data and required information may not allow for a successful analysis and interpretation (Masenya, 2018:47).

The relevant population from which the empirical data for the **quantitative phase** is obtained for this study are the undergraduate students of the NWU and particularly at the Potchefstroom campus, as illustrated in Tables 3.1-3.3 below.

Table 3.2. Population of undergraduate contact students

POPULATION: 2022 Potchefstroom campus undergraduate contact students (19/05/2022)																			
	Total			Humanities		Natural and Agricultural Sciences		Theology		Education sciences		Economic and management sciences		Law		Engineering		Health sciences	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	18309	7448	10861	716	1808	1343	856	73	108	792	2162	1749	1850	513	852	1095	330	1167	2895
African	8052	3054	4998	541	1247	508	408	42	87	465	880	448	641	215	359	234	89	601	1287
White	8822	3848	4974	139	429	768	405	27	18	215	992	1197	1082	244	406	825	227	433	1415
Coloured	1180	432	748	34	126	39	27	4	3	107	276	74	95	40	78	25	11	109	132
Asian	255	114	141	2	6	28	16	0	0	5	14	30	32	14	9	11	3	24	61

Table 3.2 provides the total number of undergraduate students at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus on 19 May 2022. The student numbers are also presented according to faculty, gender and race. From these 18 309 students, a quota sample was selected. This quota sample was structured according to the categories of faculty, gender and race and discussed in the next subsection.

Additionally, the target population for the **qualitative phase** focusses on all three campuses at the NWU. On each campus, the available SCC members are selected to be part of the study. SRC members are interviewed separately, based on the flow of the conversation. However, the number may change if more descriptions are needed for the study. The population chosen is not based on any quota but rather the departments within the student representative council relevant and available to the objectives of the qualitative phase of data collection. However, SCC and SRC members were interviewed who availed themselves. In other words, the selection criteria are purposive.

3.4.3. Sample frame and sample

A sampling frame can be defined as a smaller section of a defined target population (Unrau *et al.*, 2007:279). The justification for focussing the target population into a sample frame occurs as it is impractical and inefficient to study the whole population (Marshall, 1996:522). As a result, it is easier to study whole populations just by using a sampling framework with generalised characteristics, which makes it more feasible for researchers to analyse and better understand a population accurately (Sarantakos, 2012). Table 3.3., below, displays a sample frame for the quantitative phase of this students.

Table 3.3. Quota sample: 2022 PC undergraduate contact students

QUOTA SAMPLE: 2022 Potchefstroom campus undergraduate contact students																				
	Total			Humanities		Natural and Agricultural Sciences		Theology		Education sciences		Economic and management sciences		Law		Engineering		Health sciences		
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	270	112	158	11	26	20	12	1	1	12	32	27	28	8	12	16	4	17	43	
African	120	47	73	8	18	8	6	1	1	7	13	7	10	3	5	4	1	9	19	
White	129	56	73	2	6	11	6	0	0	3	15	18	16	4	6	12	3	6	21	
Coloured	19	9	10	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	4	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	
Asian	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	

Table 3.3 shows the quantitative quota sample that made up 270 undergraduate students of the NWU, Potchefstroom campus. A quota sample forms part of the non-probability sampling methods (Bryman, 2008:183). A quota sample is defined as a sampling method constructed to reflect proportionally the relative population of the people studied for a particular phenomenon, based on strata (Bryman, 2012:203). The quota strata in this study refer to the faculty, gender and race categories of the population. These strata are called quota controls and are chosen according to the relevancy to the topic being studied (Yang & Banamah, 2014:2). The usage of race and gender in this study is due to the fact that these two factors have historically been used to determine capital and doxa with regards to transformation within South Africa from colonial times to the post-apartheid era. Additionally, South Africa unlike many parts of the world was historically, nationally divided by race and gender and not nationality, age or religion. The usage of faculty is a field of which to acquire the perceptions of race and gender on transformation.

The number of units within each stratum is obtained or estimated through internal data from the NWU. These numbers are indicated in Table 3.4. Additionally, the corresponding proportions of the sample are calculated in Table 3.4. from Table 3.1.

Table 3.4. Realised sample: 2022 Potchefstroom campus undergraduate contact students

REALISED SAMPLE: 2022 Potchefstroom campus undergraduate contact students																				
	Total			Humanities		Natural and		Theology		Education sciences		Economic and		Law		Engineering		Health sciences		
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Total	270	115	155	11	26	20	13	1	1	16	30	27	28	7	11	15	5	18	41	
African	121	51	70	8	18	8	6	1	1	8	12	9	10	3	5	4	1	10	17	
White	127	54	73	2	6	11	7	0	0	5	14	16	16	4	5	11	4	5	21	
Coloured	19	9	10	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	3	2	
Asian	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	

(Mcwabeni, 2023)

The realised quota sample for the quantitative phase was not perfect hence, Table 3.4. A realised sample arises post data collection. The quota sample determines the description of participants representative of the population of the NWU. The realised sample indicates

the actual quota of participants who participated in the study. For instance, the quota extracted from the population of students demanded 120 African (Black) students with 47 being male and 73 being female. However, the realised sample shows that 121 Africans participated in the study with 51 being male and 70 being female. This could be due to sampling mistakes by the researcher or fieldworkers. Similar reasons apply to the White and the Asian population of the study. However, it must be noted that the difference between the quota sample and realised sample is very small.

Subsequently, the population of the SRC and SCC is 54 students. The 54 students represent 14 SCC members from the Potchefstroom and Vaal campuses respectively while 15 SCC members from the Mahikeng campus make up the total. Out of the 54 SCC members selected from the population, 17 were purposively interviewed. This refers to purposely chosen key informants who are relevant for the study through the researcher’s discretion in all three campuses (Sarantakos, 2013:177-178). The 17 comprise of 10 SCC members from the Potchefstroom and 7 SRC members respectively with 3 Focus groups coming from all three campuses.

Table 3.5. Sample for Qualitative interviews

Interviews	Date
Focus group PC (7 students)	2022
Focus group MC (5 students)	2022
Focus Group VC (12 student)	2022
SRC Member 1	2024
SRC Member 2	2024
SRC Member 3	2024
SRC Member 4	2024
SRC Member 5	2024
SRC Member 6	2024
SRC Member 7	2024
SCC PC Member 1	2024
SCC PC Member 2	2024

SCC PC Member 3	2024
SCC PC Member 4	2024
SCC PC Member 5	2024
SCC PC Member 6	2024
SCC PC Member 7	2024
SCC PC Member 8	2024
SCC PC Member 10	2024

(Mcwabeni, 2024)

3.5. Empirical data collection

Data in this study refers to the information or evidence collected by the researcher in order to understand a certain phenomenon better. The data collection method must ensure information is collected that will address the research questions in the study and be linked to the flow of argumentation, as well as the models created for the purpose of this study from the literature review. The collection of empirical data was conducted by means of physical paper questionnaires. A questionnaire is a research method instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents (Kabir, 2016:208).

3.5.1. Quantitative data collection methods

Quantitative data collection methods utilise numerical measurements to assist the researcher accomplish the empirical objectives of the study (Zikmund & Babin, 2013:134). The numerical measurement includes structured interviews, questionnaires, scales, indexes and checklists. However, for this study, a physical questionnaire data collection method is adopted. (Marais, 2013:56). Masenya (2018:56) defines a questionnaire as a document that contains questions, as well as other types of items designed to solicit information on participant's attitude, knowledge and motivation towards the topic of the study, that can be used for analysis (Delpont & Roestenburg, 2011:186; Malhotra, 2010:211).

The questionnaire adopted a format of which structured questions were phrased as statements in a Lickert scale. This method allowed the researcher to derive information

that reflect the attitudes and views of the participants (Marais,2013: 58). McDaniel and Gates (2010:201) argue that structured questions are more useful as interview questionnaires, which is what was utilised in this study. Contrarily, the qualitative phase is associated with a more unstructured or open-ended questionnaire.

3.5.1.1. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire design is a very delicate and a strategic process in survey studies (Roets, 2013:37). It ensures that the objectives of the study are addressed and are structured in such a way that the participant wants to participate and can comprehend the study (Malhotra, 2010:336; Welman *et al.*, 2005:176). It is important that the questionnaire is not time-consuming. The phrasing of the questionnaire and the statements in the questionnaire should be appropriate (Pallant, 2007:10). The cover letter must be available in the front page and all ethical considerations and rights explained.

Malhotra (2010:336) further argues that a good questionnaire design is characterised by well-defined objectives which clearly specify what the study requires. This refers to the language used, the words used and the way in which the statements are phrased to ensure that the participants know what is asked and required (Welman *et al.*, 2005:176). Additionally, the focus needed to complete the questionnaire is importantly determined by the relationship the researcher has with the topic being studied (Sarantakos, 2013:253). The questionnaire for this dissertation was lengthy but straightforward. This was because it formed part of the Honours students research project questionnaire. The Honours students therefore assisted conducting the survey. The language of the study was English to ensure it is easily accessible to the participants.

3.5.1.2. Questionnaire format

The questionnaire format, as mentioned above, has a cover letter which contains an introductory paragraph, outlining in brief the research in progress. The process attached shows the relevant and confidentiality processes of the research. This includes the purpose of the questionnaire, the faculty responsible, the ethics number, the collection and analysis of data for postgraduate research. Furthermore, it offers an undertaking to the participant to offer consent through signing and dating the agreement. The name, surname and contact info are optional to the participant.

The questionnaire itself consists of eighteen pages divided into eleven sections. However, for this study only section 1 and 10 were considered and not section 11 since the environmental perceptions are not discussed in the perspective of transformation in higher education. The sections consist of either yes or no questions and Likert Scale statements for participants. Furthermore, there are questions aimed at determining the surety of statements participants identify with. The questionnaire is a quantitative questionnaire utilising a Likert scale to capture participant responses. The Likert scale ranges from section to section, but for the purpose of data captured for this study, the scale is from strongly agreeing to a particular statement, being neutral on that statement or strongly disagreeing with that statement. On occasion the answer scale refers to the extent of which participants agree or disagree as well as how fair the statement is. For this study, the format of the questionnaire is an interview-based format, which was utilised during the quantitative data collection format.

3.5.1.3. Questionnaire and content layout

The conceptualisation of the theme of the study informed the items in the questionnaire, which had two relevant sections. The first section was on the demographics of the participants who participated in the study, while the second one had five sections related to the perceptions on transformation. In total, the questionnaire contained 34 statements divided into the five focus areas of transformation in this study.

- **Section A (section 1 on questionnaire): Demographic information**

Section A aimed at obtaining demographic information. This section included information on the following participant characteristics: age, gender and race, geographic location and socio-economic status. Additionally, the participants had to indicate which faculty they are enrolled in at the time of the questionnaire. These were 20 statements in total divided into the five sections mentioned in the second sentence above.

- **Section B (section 10 on questionnaire): Perspectives on transformational issues**

In this section, students had to indicate to which extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements which were made. These statements revolved around the following five key transformational issues at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

1. Transformational issues which included statements on discrimination, defining transformation, reporting transformation and interest in transformation.
2. Experiences of transformation based on the three-part model. This model is divided in three spheres, namely the personal, political and practical spheres.
3. Student life as a part of transformation, including statements assessing transformation activities like RAG, culture, and power.
4. North-West University Management Culture, which was initially institutional culture and involves statements surrounding diversity and language.
5. Teaching and learning, which contains statements around curriculum transformation.

3.5.1.4. Pilot testing questionnaire

This section refers to the process of testing a questionnaire on a limited sample to screen potential challenges or problems in the study (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015:279). In this study, the biggest input piloting had, was to evaluate the difficulty as well as the wording sequence of the questionnaire (Malhotra, 2010:345). The questionnaire was piloted on a convenience sample of 11 undergraduate students.

These students were tasked with evaluating the questionnaire and reporting the feedback to the researcher, indicating the potential errors in the study. The report to the researcher was concerning the phrasing of the statements, the difficulty in understanding the concepts discussed and the time frame of the questionnaire, which is approximated to be 90 minutes. Thereafter, the questionnaire was analysed and modifications made. Those participants in the pilot were not allowed to participate in the final study questionnaire. The questionnaire was reduced to 60 minutes and the statements related to the study were improved and simplified, where necessary.

3.5.2. Qualitative data collection methods

Qualitative data collection involves obtaining access, implementing a good qualitative strategy, developing a means for recording information, storing data and anticipating any ethical issues that may occur (Creswell, 2012:331. Quinlan *et al.*, 2015:16). It is argued in many writings that the main data collection methods used in qualitative research are

observations and interviews (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Mack *et al.*, 2005; Cooper & Schindler, 2014). The latter was used in this study.

3.5.2.1. Interviews

DePoy & Gilson (2008) asserts that qualitative interviews are an exploration of individual perceptions and experiences of participants. This information is obtained through recorded individual interviews and focus groups to acquire detail on a phenomenon that isn't studied much (Greeff (2011:342)). This section describes the process taken throughout the data collection phase of the qualitative phase of the study.

Each participating student from the SCC/SRC was identified through a purposive sampling method and was asked to give consent on record. To contact the participants, the researcher used the SCC vice chairperson at the NWU, PC campus, who called the requested participants to a boardroom for a focus group session, as part of the data collection method at the Potchefstroom campus.

The qualitative phase involves all three campuses at the NWU. Therefore, the second set of interviews came from the Mahikeng campus. In Mahikeng, the data collection was divided into two parts. The first was a focus group of five individuals from their SCC followed by cellular interviews to the remaining members of the SCC, namely, the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Academic Officer, Transformation Officer and the Secretary. The reason behind this approach is due to the schedule of the Mahikeng SCC members. Lastly, the Vaal campus interviews, which took the form of a focus group with the discussion open to more members of the SCC, as the majority were available. For this focus group seven SCC members were used.

One-to-one interviews occur between the researcher and the participants willing to be part of the study, to exchange information, which is what occurred with the SCC chairperson at the NWU, PC and the Transformation officer at the PC, as well as the second round of interviews in Mahikeng through cellular interviews (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015:133). Greeff (2011:342) refers to an interview that occurs between the interviewer and interviewee wherein the attitude, behaviour, perception and experiences are captured as conversations with a central focus and not one-sided (Morse, 2011:342). These interviews are not one sided but must ensure that the researcher only facilitates

the interview. This means that the participant speaks most of the time while the interviewer probes (Masenya, 2006:674). Conversely, in focus groups, the researcher interviews a group of usually six to ten participants (Zikmund & Babin, 2013:142). Additionally, the researcher has the group interact to screen and refine certain concepts.

3.6. Data preparation and analysis of quantitative data

The analysis of data follows from the data the researcher collects. Therefore, in quantitative research, a survey is used as an instrument to record data through questionnaires (Neuman, 2014:320). Data analysis begins where data collection ends. This process consists of three steps, which are fundamental to this despite the complexity or context of the study. Sarantakos (2013:405) and Babbie (2013:414), contend that the *first step* involves the preparation of data through checking and editing what needs coding. It is important to note that this study, through the use of SPSS 29, used descriptive statistics, t-tests, Anona tests, factor analysis to make sense of the acquired data.

A *second step* involves the data entry into a computer for software analysis. In the case of this study, SPSS is the computer software that was used to analyse the data. The procedure within SPSS takes place in the “Data Editor”, which appears as “Data View” and “Variable View”. The data entry entails two processes: a) defining the variables, (b) entering the data. The former ensures that the name and attributes of each variable are defined in the variable view. In the latter, the data related to each variable will be added to the data view (Babbie, 2013:418). This means that, for example, values (e.g. 1 and 2) and value labels (Male and Female) that represent the data are entered into the SPSS dataset on a computer as codes (Neuman, 2014:394).

Coding means that verbal responses are converted into numerical codes. For instance, “Male” may be given the code 1 and “Female” may be given the code 2. These codes are transferred into a dataset. The researcher checks and monitors coding to ensure that errors are prevented. Saratakos (2013:406) asserts that this process or practice is about coder reliability, which occurs in the following contexts: the first involves reliability of the coder (coder maintains a stable pattern of coding and variability is avoided) and secondly it is analysed through inter-coder reliability, which basically investigates whether the codes can be tested by other coders to yield the same result.

A *third step* in analysing data is how the data is presented to give a structure to the information gathered. The most common presentations of data occur in the following ways. At first, univariate tables are generated. These tables are also known as frequency tables, containing one variable such as the number of student responses for a certain question. Multivariate tables for categories such as gender, religiosity or faculty were also used. These tables were checked for discrepancies in the data to be then corrected (Sarantakos, 2013:410).

Lastly, the data is processed for statistics analysis. These techniques offer descriptive statistics. Furthermore, other techniques that were utilised focusses on relationships between variables to investigate and look for associations (correlations), thus known as relational statistics in data.

In processing data for statistical analysis, three crucial steps are involved. First, the measures of central tendency. This refers to the practice of computing averages, which are the most common value in a distribution. The most useful measures to compute such values are the mean, mode and the median (Sarantakos, 2013:418-418; Babbie, 2013:442-443). Secondly, the measures of dispersion. Dispersion in data analysis refers to the way values are spread around the central value or mean (average), which is displayed in the range within the data analysed. The range refers to the distance between the lowest value and the highest value (Babbie, 2013:446). The statistical dispersion, namely the standard deviation, is also calculated, which also considers the variance (the average of the distances of individual scores from the mean) and the range as explained above (Sarantakos, 2013:419).

3.6.1. Analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative data analysis in this study is a continued process that occurs consciously or sub-consciously to the researcher (Basil, 2003:145). In this study, the researcher utilises a thematic analysis for the data used. Themes in this case refer to the data information that is comprised of codes that combine to form a common idea (Creswell., 2011:410). Additionally, to get sufficient data to do the analysis, Creswell (2013:560) argues that five to seven themes for a research study should be sufficient. Additionally, these themes could represent the identified issues in the study and are usually used as headings of that analysis (Creswell, 2013:560; Lacy & Luff, 2001:25). This, they argue, would be

confirmation of the importance of the study and ensures further exploration of a particular phenomenon.

Qualitative deductive analysis refers to the extent to which data in a study is supported through generalisations, conceptualisations, explanations, results and theories from themes identified within a study. Inductive data analysis involves generating new concepts, explanations, results and theories from the specific data of qualitative studies. Patton (2016:542) argues that in the early stage's qualitative analysis is inductive as the researcher develops codes, themes for content analysis and for configuring possible categories for content analysis. Qualitative analysis is deductive in the latter stages, when conclusions are tested to affirm authenticity and appropriateness.

Qualitative data analysis is an all-inclusive process that is continuous throughout the study (Masenya, 2018:105). The researcher thinks of ways in which they can make sense of data in terms of coding, categorisation or themes to explain the phenomena (Basit, 2003:145). Furthermore, qualitative computer data analysis software is used to assist in the thematic analysis of the collected data. Creswell (2013:548) asserts that software programs help researchers organise, categorise and code information in text databases like the Atlas.ti, which were utilised during qualitative analysis.

The process implemented to analyse this study's collected qualitative data follows the generally used stages involved in data analysis mainly description, interpretation, conclusion and theorisation (Quinlan *et al.*, 2015:322) as illustrated in the Figure 3.1 below.

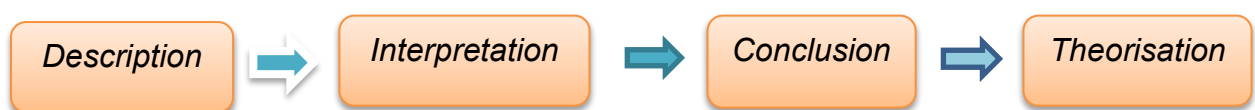


Figure 3.1. Stages involved in data analysis (Masenya, 2018)

During description, the researcher describes the data by defining what they see in the data collected in the study. During interpretation, the researcher states what the data means. From the interpretation of the data conclusions are drawn on the assumptions from the data towards the conclusions of the study. Lastly, in the theorisation of the data

analysis, the researcher compares the analysis to the literature review to see whether the data fits or contradicts, the findings of theorists (Quinlin *et al.*, 2015).

Table 3.6. Analysis of qualitative data

Step One	Organise and prepare the data for analysis (Creswell, 2012:407)	The field notes gathered were recorded on a phone. The researcher also took notes that served as backup and provided the context of interviews. The recorded data from the interviews was transcribed into text as soon as possible before it could be analysed (Lacey & Luff, 2001:22).
Step Two	Familiarisation	Familiarisation refers to reading and re-reading, summarising making memos of the recordings and data before the formal analysis (Lacey & Luff, 2001:22). During this phase, the researcher gains an overview of the data's diversity, richness and depth and its conceptualisation (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002).
Step Three	Themes	A number of themes are created through codes used to form common ideas (Cresswell, 2012:414). These themes are likely to match those derived from the quantitative data analysis.
Step Four	Ensuring rigour	Here, the researcher ensures the reliability and validity of qualitative data through trustworthiness.
Step Five	Making an interpretation of the data	This final step included lessons learnt and presented in the form of the researcher's personal interpretation of the data. It also involved the meanings derived from the comparison of findings with information gathered from literature and theoretical frameworks. The researcher also checked whether the findings of the study confirmed or were divergent from the assumptions stated in Chapter 1 (Creswell, 2009:189).

(Masenya, 2018)

The quantitative phase of this process was to identify from the generalised elements of transformation, the factors that can predict a transformation perception. This was accomplished using a Likert scale. The identified themes in the qualitative phase were used to further explain the significance of external and internal factors to the perceptions of transformation.

3.7. Ethical considerations

In this section the ethical considerations of the research are explained. Additionally, part of these considerations is permission to conduct research and the approval of the chosen study. Therefore, this section represents a very important aspect of research.

3.7.1. Approval to conduct research at the NWU

Before being allowed to collect data for a study at the NWU, the application for ethics in research must be submitted. These steps involve the following, in brief. The supervisor submits the research proposal to the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) Administrator. The BaSSREC Chairperson sends the document for review. Reviewers then send the report from the submitted proposal back to the Chairperson. The Chairperson consolidates all feedback received through the BaSSREC summary report for the committee meeting. In this meeting, the committee analyses, discusses and make recommendations and then decide whether it is approved or should further referrals be made.

The proposal is sent back with the recommendations on each section with regards to the importance of the comments or need for review as well as the reasons why. Once the researcher marked amendments listed in the rebuttal form, the supervisor submits the proposal with the amendments to the administrator who forwards it to the chairperson, and it is added to the next BaSSREC committee meeting for the same process of deliberations to continue and decision to be made. Once the proposal is approved, the applicant must submit the completed and updated study documents (proposal, informed consent and participants information leaflets) to the BaSSREC administrator. The study then receives the final ethics clearance. For this study it is numbered NWU-00968-22-A7. If the NWU students are used in the research study, the NWU Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC) permission must be obtained after the BaSSREC approval letter has been awarded. This study received such permission, and it is numbered NWU-GK-22-036.

3.7.2. Maintaining ethical standards in social research

Discussions on social research ethics tend to occur based on the transgressions by researchers of said ethical principles. This is a result of the many challenges that occur

in the process of conducting research (Bryman, 2012:135). In this study, the focus of these ethical principles is between the researcher, field workers and the respondent. In any instance, there are areas that are integral to maintaining an ethical research process. These refer to not harming participants, obtaining informant consent and not invading the privacy of the participants, as well as not deceiving the participants. However, it is also important to note that research ethical principles are also designed to protect the researcher and research credibility of the study.

In Bryman (2012:135), harm to participants refers to physically or emotionally harming the participants. This is possible through a loss of self-esteem, stress and inducing subjects to perform reprehensible acts. In this study, particular attention was placed on the fact that transformation can be a very political subject, which can induce certain feelings of harm in respondents. As a result, the purpose and main aim of the study was explained prior to conducting qualitative or quantitative interviews. Therefore, participants were given a choice to withdraw from the study at any time if they feel discomfort with the content of the questions asked.

Secondly, deception refers to allowing participants through manipulation or coercion (which is also harm) to participate in an undesirable study due to false information provided (Sarantakos, 2013:18). Moreover, informed consent can occur in two ways. In the context of this study, there is an informed consent form that is approved by the ethics committee of the NWU. This form states who the researcher is, the nature of the research, consequences of the study and the rights and privileges of the respondent. Additionally, consent for the quantitative phase is administered and requested through the cover letter with a signature and date. In the qualitative phase, consent is offered through the audio recording.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are three areas of importance in social research. Privacy refers to ethical standards, prescribing those researchers should abstain from delving into the private affairs of the subjects. Researchers are not allowed to ask personal and sensitive questions unless it is methodologically and ethically approved. Anonymity is important in view of the Protection of Personal Information Act 3, 2013, the personal rights of respondents and to protect them. Anonymity ensures that the participant cannot be identified. Unlike anonymity, names are on the research instrument

or data, whereas with confidentiality names are on the instrument and data but are not available to the public and will ensure it cannot be traced (Sarantakos, 2013:20). In this study anonymity was adhered to.

In this study, the three areas of importance were guaranteed to participants by being honest with the participants about what the study entails. Privacy is guaranteed by alerting participants to their options with regards to the study, the reason being that if questions are intrusive or if they prefer the interview to be stopped, they should alert the researcher. Additionally, should participants feel that they would rather have the interview face to face or through a telephone they would have the researchers contacts. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed by respecting the wishes of the participants and alerting them to their rights, including confidentiality and anonymity.

3.8. Limitations of the research

The study has managed to achieve all its stated objectives; however, the study acknowledges its limitations. Firstly, the study phenomenon is very broad, therefore, a framework was modelled to address the elements that make up the concept. Additionally, the study began with lexicon definitions just to offer a general idea of where the phenomenon is coming from. Secondly, the sample of the study did not represent the entire university, therefore, the researcher used a mixed-method and included the SCC of the Vaal and Mahikeng. In this way, the study can consider itself not limited to just the PC. Lastly, the sample chosen for the quantitative phase was only focused on one campus. Thus, the additional (qualitative) sequential phase of the mixed-method research.

Secondly, Covid-19 put a pause to the study. The pandemic delayed the research for two years. In this time, only Chapter 1 (proposal) and Chapter 2 (literature review) was done. The reason behind the unfortunate delay/pause to the research study was due to the fact there were no students on campus between 2020 and 2021. The study remained relevant, due to the fact that the transformation elements identified are more likely to be emphasised by the pandemic. The logical solution in that regard would be online surveys. However, the survey could not be numbered correctly, students had no data or computers. And there was no way to know which student has no computer or data. There was no solution but the patience to wait for students to return.

With students back, the challenge was the 250 questionnaires that must be filled in. Therefore, the Masters and Honours data collection phase was mixed into one. During the pilot study, the concern participants had was based on the jargon used in the questionnaire. The next thing to do is to change how the statements are phrased. Additionally, getting qualitative interviews from the Vaal and Mahikeng campuses was challenging. As a result, a trip was made to the two campuses for focus group interviews. Lastly, a challenge faced in this study revolves around the ethical standards of research. This surrounds the question of whether SCC/SRC members can decline to participate in research that hold them accountable or have significance to those they represent. This of course does not include instances where participation compromises proprietary information. This issue is yet to be resolved for future research.

3.9. Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter 3 of this dissertation entailed the discussion of the study's overall research design and methodology. Section 3.1 provided the introduction. Section 3.2 entailed an introduction on researching transformation in this study. This study is followed by a discussion in Section 3.2.1 on the research designs that were implemented in this study. These study designs refer to the qualitative study design, quantitative study design as well as the mixed methods study design. From Sections 3.2.1.1 to 3.2.1.4 the main study paradigms (not only those applicable to the study), namely the positivist, constructivist, participatory and pragmatic paradigms are discussed. Section 3.3 includes a discussion on the research approach and designated designs of the study.

Chapter 3 mainly focussed the three different study research approaches mainly used in this study. Firstly, the quantitative approach in research as well as the research design (cross-sectional research design) employed in this study. Secondly, this section discusses the qualitative phase of this research study, as well as the research design (Case study) employed in this study. Lastly, this study discusses the mixed-method research approach as the chosen approach for this study. This includes the varying designs of the mixed-method approach. Furthermore, Section 3.4 discusses the sampling strategies for the study. This refers to the sampling methods, the target population, and the sample frame used in this study.

From this chosen sample, the data was collected. Therefore, Section 3.5 discussed the empirical data collection from both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Thereafter, data had to be prepared and analysed from both the quantitative and qualitative phases within the study. As a result, Section 3.6 focussed on the data preparation and analysis methods of analysing data. This section covered the pilot and pre-testing of data collection instruments. This section also covered the pre-testing of the interview questions as well as the pilot testing of questionnaire which was used in this study. In section 3.7 the ethical considerations of the research study are discussed. This included the approval process at the NWU and how to maintain the ethical standards of research. To conclude this section, the study discusses the limitations faced in this study and the solutions to those challenges.

Therefore, in conclusion, it can be stated that the chosen research methodology (mix-method) was in fact sufficient. The approach to the study which entailed using a mixed method approach afforded the researcher an opportunity to obtain rich and comprehensive data. This approach covered a range of themes and subjects which involved a personal and collective relationship to transformation, as it relates to the perceptions of transformation at the NWU. This chapter answered the following questions, and the objective decided on in Chapter 1. The first refers to the question: what is the applicable methodology used to study transformation and transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus? Secondly, what are the applicable mixed methodology used for the investigation into student perceptions on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus?

What is suggested therefore was a methodology that is both comprehensive. As a result, this methodology employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. This refers to the methodologies of mixed-method research following on each other. In this case, the qualitative approach in the next chapter followed the quantitative approach. This section comprehensively discussed the nature and characteristics of the employed research methodology as well as the way data was collected and analysed. The empirical data collected and analysed was used to address the research question concerning the following. Firstly, what can be understood as higher education transformation; secondly, what conclusions and recommendations can be drawn based on the findings on the perceptions of students at the NWU? And lastly, what are the quantitative perceptions of

students of transformation through the statistical analysis (analysis of the results and its interpretation) done in Chapter 4 to come? The latter will be discussed below.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFORMATION AT THE NWU, PC

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the quantitative research findings of this dissertation as previously mentioned. As stated in Chapter 1, the quantitative discussion precedes the qualitative discussion. For the quantitative data collection, structured interviews were conducted among a sample of 270 undergraduate students at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.

As mentioned, a mix methodology was employed, divided into a quantitative section and qualitative section. The quantitative section's analysis is inversed. This means that the quantitative data analysis is explored first. It is important to note, that in this dissertation, hypotheses are not proposed since it is an exploratory study in nature not an explanatory one. The reason is because the topic studied in this dissertation is unexplored at the NWU. Therefore, the lack of knowledge on transformation in the context of this study makes it difficult to test existing variables, opinions and relationships in that regard. However, statistical tests on the significance of relationships between variables are investigated in the last section of the chapter. It is also important to mention that missing data were not incorporated in the analysis and neutral responses were used in the analysis and showed in the frequency table. These are linked to the literature review.

The descriptive statistics and statistical tests follow on the discussion as follows:

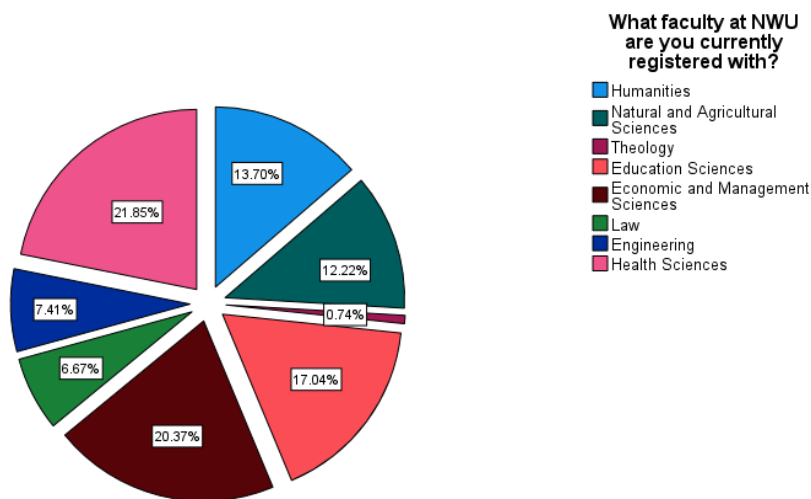
First, in this chapter, the categorical information on the sample is presented. The sample is discussed in terms of its distribution according to the quota sampling criteria of gender, race and faculty. Next, descriptive statistics are provided on the student's perceptions of transformation in terms of student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning. Additionally, the discussion continues with the treatment of selected variables by means of factor analysis. Through this, factors on student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning are determined. The relationship of these factors is then statistically tested with the students' gender, race, socio-economic background and geographical location.

4.2. Descriptive statistics of sampling categories

The following graphs represent the sample of 270 undergraduate's students who participated in the study. The selection criteria of the quota sampling are used to describe the profile of the participants.

Figure 4.1. indicates the eight faculties on the Potchefstroom campus used to classify the category of the students' Faculty of study. The pie chart displays the distribution of student participants among the NWU Faculties. The results of the descriptive pie chart make it evident that most participants in this study come from the Faculty of the Health Sciences and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, with 21.85% and 20.37% respectively. The lowest number of participants in this study is from the Faculty of Theology, at 0.74%.

Figure 4.1. Faculty of study of the participants at the North-West University, PC.



(Mcwabeni, 2023)

The second variable is the descriptive analysis of the racial composition of the participants as presented in Figure 4.2. The pie chart in the figure shows that the greatest composition of race displayed is White at 47.04% and Black/African at 44.81% with the Coloured population of the participants registering at 7.04%. The lowest composition of race is from the Asian population, at 1.11%. There are no individuals who refused to answer the question.

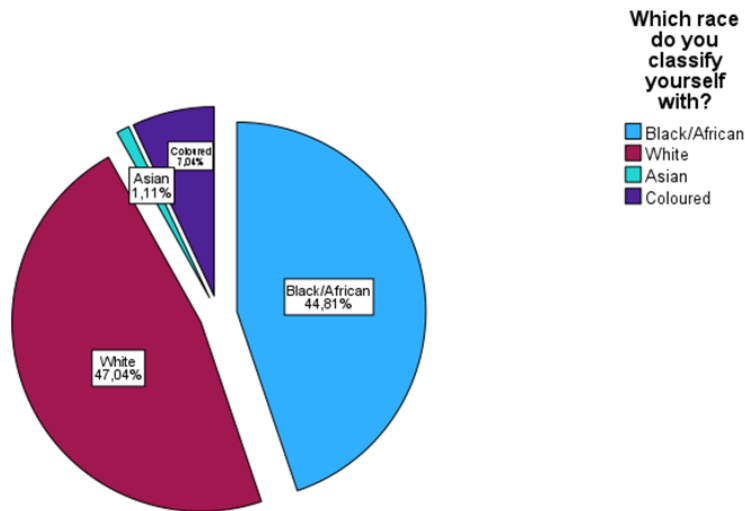


Figure 4.2. Race of the participants at the North-West University, PC.

The third variable is the descriptive analysis of the gender composition of the participants in this study. Figure 4.3. below displays that female participant make up the majority of the participants in this study registering at 57.41%, while there are 42.59% of male participants. In this sample, no students choose the “other” and the “prefer not to answer” categories.

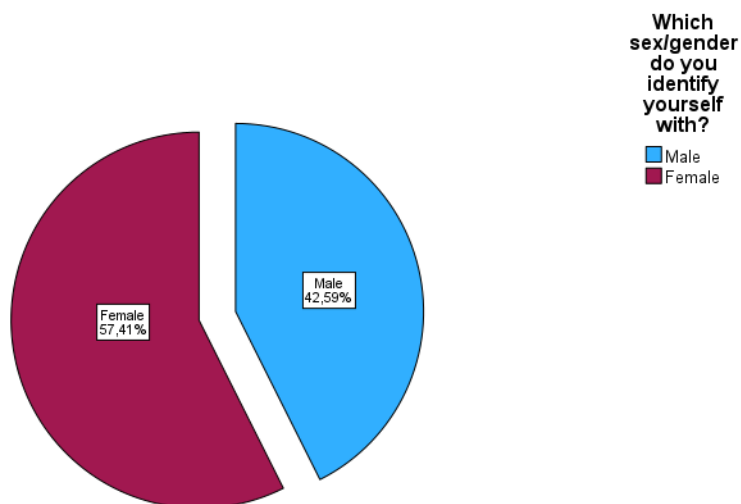


Figure 4.3. Gender of the participants at the North-West University, PC.

The above tables display the demographic descriptive canvas of student participants in this study. This sample is chosen from the PC. It is divided in this section by Faculty, Race and Gender. Section 4.2., consists of three pie charts. The first pie chart displays the composition of participants per faculty. The largest numbers of participants per faculty is both the Health Sciences (21.85%) and the Economic and Management Sciences (20.37%) respectively. The lowest number of participants in the study are from the Faculty of Theology with 0.75% of participants, followed by the 6.67% of Law students and the 7.41% of Engineering students. The Natural and Agricultural Sciences is 12.27% while the faculty of the Humanities is 13.70%, followed by the Faculty of Education at 17.04%, these faculties form part of the faculties that constitute more than 10% of participants but less than 20%.

From the faculties chosen to participate in this study, the second more vital characteristic of the study is the Race of the participants. The population studied only contained four Races. This include, but not limited to White participants (47.04%), which is more than the 44.81% of Black students with the NWU, PC as the research location. These two races also display the most dominant in terms of numbers on the campus. These two Races are joined by the Coloured population at 7.04% and the Asian population at 1.11%. Lastly, it is the Gender of participants in the study which only contains two groups, mainly, Male at 42.59% and Female at 57.41%. The displayed statistics are vital in contextualising the analyses to follow. The numbers displayed in the pie charts above of the tables to follow are only for participants at the NWU, PC.

4.3. Descriptive statistics on students' perceptions of transformation

In this section, the descriptive statistics of the students' perceptions are discussed. The descriptive statistics focuses on the items presented to participants in the quantitative questionnaire. These items are in the following order, transformational issues and perceptions of transformation at the NWU, PC in relation to student life, institutional culture (also referred to as management culture) and teaching and learning.

The descriptive statistics discussed below describe the results on the questions asked to measure perceptions of students at the NWU, PC on transformation. The questions asked are related to students' views about transformation and their perceptions on

transformation in student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning. Question 32 asked general questions about students' knowledge and their positioning towards transformation. In question 33, more focused questions were asked about the experience of transformation in student life, in the institutional culture of the NWU and in teaching and learning. In question 34, the items capture the students' perception on transformational issues related to the student life at the NWU, PC. Furthermore, question 35 focussed on students' perceptions of transformation issues related to the NWU institutional culture. Lastly, the items in question 36 dealt with students' perceptions on transformation related to teaching and learning at the NWU, PC.

In this research study a Likert scale was used to capture the perceptions of students at the NWU, PC, in questions 32, 34, 35 and 36. The purpose of this Likert scale was to assess the perceptions of students at the NWU, PC towards transformation. This is a five-point Likert scale. Participants had to either "strongly disagree, disagree, be neutral, agree or strongly agree" to the items presented. In Q33 the scale differed in the three items presented to the students. This scale had five options. The students responded to "no extent, very small extent, some extent, fairly large extent, very large extent". In question 36 the responses were "yes, no, unsure and I don't think this is applicable to my programme". Each response category was assigned a numerical value to measure perceptions from a scale of 1-5 or 1-4. These numbers in the chosen categories are used to aggregate the average of the responses. The numbers were used to obtain the general perceptions on the chosen item (Alkharusi, 2022:14). The descriptive statistics present the distribution of responses for each item across the applicable scales.

4.3.1. Transformational issues

Students are affected by transformation and change differently. It is especially important for individuals who identify as disadvantaged or inferior in one way or another (Bitzer, 2003; Jacobus, Lazenby, Radebe, 2011). Individuals are affected by racial, gendered, financial, cultural, educational, social or political factors. These intersect into inequalities that are potentially carried into higher education institutions, as argued in Chapter 2. This occurs as there is an interceding relationship between society and higher education institutions as social realms in terms of change and transformation. The university in this context acts as a response to citizen needs from the state, in relation to historical

disparities within South Africa. Although universities offer support to all students, quantile schooling systems still suggests, as an example, that inequality continues as an intersected model or ecosystem (Gore, 2021). In short, universities are spaces in which different individuals arrive with their embedded diverse histories and needs. The analysis of the statistics in this section present insights in the views of students on transformation issues at the NWU, PC.

In considering the objective of this dissertation, the intended purpose of this study is to investigate the students' perceptions on transformation in higher education and specifically the NWU, PC. It is part of the argument in this study that students should be an integral part of transformation. This section investigates the perceptions of students on transformation. The intention thereof is to recognise the diversity in human agency and to its relationship with the identification and construction of the structural systems (political sphere), institutional systems (practical sphere) and individual systems (personal sphere). It is also important to note that these dimensions are embedded within students' views.

Therefore, the items in table 4.1., Question 32, below, addresses statements on students' knowledge on discrimination, accountability, interest in transformation and a need for transformation. These diverse items are of importance in considering the spaces in which inequalities exists and the potential to collaborate on possible interventions.

Table 4.1. Transformational issues

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Total		
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q32.1. I know what is meant by transformation at the NWU.	15	5.6%	36	13.3%	86	31.9%	95	35.2%	38	14.1%	270	3.39	1.060
Q32.2. Currently I experience discrimination against me (as who I am) at the NWU.	85	31.5%	109	40.4%	39	14.4%	28	10.4%	9	3.3%	270	2.14	1.077
Q32.3. Before now, I experienced discrimination at the NWU as who I am.	87	32.2%	115	42.6%	31	11.5%	30	11.1%	7	2.6%	270	2.09	1.054

Q32.4. I am not interested in transformation issues at the NWU.	32	11.9%	81	30.1%	101	37.5%	40	14.9%	15	5.6%	269	2.72	1.037
Q32.5. I think the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is in need of transformation (the student body has too much inequality).	25	9.3%	51	18.9%	106	39.3%	47	17.4%	41	15.2%	270	3.10	1.155
Q32.6. I reported to authorities at the NWU (e.g. the Dean of Student Life, the SRC, or house committees in the residencies) matters that I feel need transformation.	107	39.6%	91	33.7%	45	16.7%	16	5.9%	11	4.1%	270	2.01	1.082

As a result, Table 4.1. indicates the profile of the responses on the question items on transformational issues. There are five items offered to students to respond to in Question 32.1. All participants (270) responded to the statement, “I know what is meant by transformation at the NWU”. The distribution on this statistic suggests that there are 49.3% of students who agree and strongly agree that they know what is meant by transformation. This value is higher than the 18.9% who strongly disagree and disagree with not knowing what is meant by transformation. In this item, 31.9% of students, which is quite a significant number of students, were neutral. This skewed distribution to the right implies a positive outcome in communicating transformation at the NWU. The minority of students did not know what transformation meant at the NWU. The majority was informed, yet a considerable group was uncertain about whether they know or not. It could also mean that they do not care to know.

The distribution in item 32.2 shows that 71.9% of students strongly disagree or disagree experiencing discrimination against them as who they are currently. This statistic is significantly higher than the 13.7% of students who agree and strongly agree to being discriminated against currently. In this item, only 14.4 of students remain neutral. As a result, this distribution to the left of the scale suggests that most students do not generally experience discrimination as to who they are at the NWU currently. Question 32.3. displays a distribution of item-statistics which suggests that 74.8% of students strongly disagree or disagree to being discriminated against who they are at the NWU previously. The students who agree are significantly low, as 13.6% of students have experienced

discrimination as to who they are at the NWU previously. Similarly, to the previous item, there is no major cluster of students who are neutral in this item, with only 11.1% of students remaining neutral. Here too, students generally did not perceive themselves as discriminated against as to who they are at the NWU previously.

Question 32 also addresses the interest of students on transformation issues at the NWU. In Question 32.4., 42% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed with the question whether they are not interested in transformation issues at the NWU. A considerable group of students took a neutral stance on the issue, with a value of 37.5%. In contrast, 17,5% of the students agree or strongly agreed with not being interested in transformation issues at the NWU. The students are therefore interested in transformation issues or neutral towards such issues at the NWU. Question 32.5., “I think the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is in need of transformation (the student body has too much inequality)” displays a distribution of a neutral value of 39.30%. The students who agreed and strongly agreed were 32.9% and the students who strongly disagreed and disagreed were 28.2%. This distribution displays that the students do not have consensus to whether the NWU, PC is in need of transformation (e.g., that the student body has too much inequality).

Lastly, is the statement in Question 32.6 “I reported to authorities at the NWU (e.g., the Dean of student life, the SRC, or house committees in the residencies) matters I feel need transformation”. The distribution of statistics in the item above displays that 73.3% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed to reporting issues they feel need transformation at the NWU, PC. In addition, 16.7% of students remain neutral to reporting issue of transformation, while 10% of students agreed or strongly agreed to the reporting of issues, they feel need transformation at the NWU. These frequencies indicate a lack of interest among students to involve themselves in transformation issues at NWU.

In conclusion, the following is observed. When analysing the conclusion of frequencies per item, it is evident that some students are knowledgeable and interested in what is meant by transformation at the NWU, but also a considerable number are neutral about it. Students are also interested in transformation issues at the NWU. This contrasts with students not actively reporting matters in need of transformation at the NWU. In general, the students also did not indicate themselves as victims of discrimination currently or in

the past at the NWU for whom they are. These variances in responses can be explored in the qualitative part of this study.

The main objective of this study is to determine the perceptions of students on transformation. Transformations at the NWU were attempts to overcome the history of discrimination in South Africa. The perceptions of students on these transformations are explained by the five nested levels of consciousness. The argument in this study to include the levels of consciousness is important since students are a vital stakeholder to transformation in higher education and that transformation and protests thereof do not occur in a vacuum. In the personal sphere the first level of consciousness is the embedded level, which is a consciousness shaped by socialisation. This refers to factors that lie outside of conscious awareness which includes beliefs, values and influences social attitudes. The second level refers to being self-reflexive on how the environment shapes own experiences and being aware thereof. The third level refers to engaging with difference, resistance and processes of change. The fourth level is about actively collaborating to co-create change with the help of connections and networks.

According to the descriptive statistics, about half of the students have a second level awareness of the meaning of transformation and are interested in it and a half do not care. It is not in their consciousness. Most students also have no awareness of past or current discrimination at the NWU, do not see a need for transformation and is not actively involved in processes to contribute to it. It can therefore be concluded that although there is a second level awareness of transformation issues among students, their experience thereof is more on a first level – they are not aware thereof. The result is that a small number of students reach the third level of engagement and even less students reach the fourth level of activism. This can be due to constraints in the political sphere. However, it seems the students have quite an awareness of the transformation outcomes in the practical sphere. This is further interrogated in Table 4.2.

4.3.2. Transformation perceptions of students at the NWU, PC

Question 32 investigated the awareness of students of the practical sphere. It therefore asked specifically about the student's awareness of transformation in the institutional

culture, teaching and learning as well as student life. The scale in Question 33 differs from the scale in Question 32 as discussed above. The choice to change scales was done consciously, with an understanding that these perceptions of transformation occur within an institution where transformation is already underway. Therefore, a degree of measure is more relevant than exclusivity in disagreeing or agreeing, as well as offering neutrality to an ongoing process.

Table 4.2. Perceptions of transformation

	No Extent		Very Small Extent		Some Extent		Fairly Large Extent		Very Large Extent		Total		
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
	Q33.1. I experience transformation in student life at the NWU (meaning the student life now accommodates all student groups).	20	7.4%	45	16.7%	98	36.4%	77	28.6%	29	10.8%	269	3.19
Q33.2. I experience the management of the NWU to be accommodating of all groups.	25	9.3%	39	14.6%	98	36.6%	86	32.1%	20	7.5%	268	3.14	1.060
Q33.3. I experience transformation in the academic programmes of the NWU campus (meaning African related and directed content are taught).	34	12.6%	42	15.6%	96	35.7%	73	27.1%	24	8.9%	269	3.04	1.137

The first item measured the participants experience of transformation in student life. The frequency table demonstrates that 7.4% of students experienced transformation to no extent in the student life at the NWU. More than half of the students, namely 53.1%, indicated they experienced transformation at the NWU to a very small to some extent. The students who indicated that they experienced transformation at the NWU, a fairly

large and very large extent were 39.4%. Generally, the students experienced transformation to some and fairly large extent (65%).

Secondly, Table 4.2 displays the descriptive statistics of the statement that students experience whether the management of the NWU is accommodating of all groups. This relates to the university's institutional culture. There were 9.3% of the students who did not experience the management of the NWU to be accommodating of all groups. The frequency on the table shows that 51.2% of the students agreed to a very small and some extent that the management of the NWU was accommodating of all groups. Additionally, 39.6% of the students agreed to a fairly large and very large extent to experiencing the management of the NWU to be accommodating of all groups. This implies that the management of the NWU is accommodating to all groups with regards to institutional culture. Again, generally most students, 68.7%, did experience to some or fairly large extent that the management of the NWU was accommodating to all groups.

The last item in Question 33 asked about student's experience of transformation in the academic programmes of the NWU campus (meaning African related and directed content are taught). The frequencies show that only 12.6% of students did not experienced transformation in the academic programmes of the NWU. The students who experienced transformation in the academic programmes to a very small and some extents were 51.3%. Additionally, those who experienced it to a fairly and very large extent was at 36%. Again, as with the previous items, most students experienced transformation to some or fairly large extent (62.8%).

The importance of this section rests on the following. The practical sphere in this study represents the outcome of transformation stemming from the personal and political spheres. In this study, the practical sphere is limited to the NWU as an institution of higher learning. The practical sphere also influences the personal sphere. The frequencies of Question 33 demonstrate the high awareness among students of the outcome of transformation in the practical sphere. This seems to be largely management driven, as we have seen in Question 32 limited involvement of students in the political sphere. However, it is now important to investigate students' perceptions on transformation

separately for student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning. Questions 34-36 investigate that.

4.3.3. Transformation perceptions in student life

Table 4.3. indicates the frequencies of the perceptions of students on student life and aspects of transformation. There are nine items designed to measure the perceptions of on student life and transformation at the NWU. For the nine items in Question 34, all 270 students of the sample answered all. Like the scale in the questionnaire, the table of frequencies analysed below, displays the answer categories and the mean.

Table 4.3. Student Life

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Total		
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q34.1. Social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU are inclusive for all cultures.	11	4.1%	35	13.0%	83	30.7%	107	39.6%	34	12.6%	270	3.44	1.003
Q34.2. Student life at the Potchefstroom campus is inclusive in nature.	9	3.3%	38	14.1%	97	35.9%	102	37.8%	24	8.9%	270	3.35	0.943
Q34.3. NWU students can influence policies that influence them (e.g. policies about equality, curriculum changes, residency admission).	7	2.6%	32	11.9%	116	43.0%	93	34.4%	22	8.1%	270	3.34	0.884
Q34.4. I believe students have the power to influence policy changes.	5	1.9%	22	8.1%	79	29.3%	122	45.2%	42	15.6%	270	3.64	0.904
Q34.5. The NWU involve students in transformational projects, activities and initiatives that had been initiated to create a culture of equality and non-racialism.	9	3.3%	34	12.6%	116	43.0%	89	33.0%	22	8.1%	270	3.30	.910
Q34.6. My understanding is that the culture of the residences on the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is inclusive of all groups.	19	7.0%	42	15.6%	91	33.7%	89	33.0%	29	10.7%	270	3.25	1.067

Q34.7. The student leadership represents my views and preferences.	9	3.3%	44	16.3%	136	50.4%	71	26.3%	10	3.7%	270	3.11	0.836
Q34.8. I experience non-racialism at the Potchefstroom campus.	17	6.3%	40	14.8%	86	31.9%	86	31.9%	41	15.2%	270	3.35	1.100
Q34.9. Students experience political freedom at the Potchefstroom campus irrespective of their political affiliation.	10	3.7%	31	11.5%	122	45.2%	83	30.7%	24	8.9%	270	3.30	0.917

The first item designed to measure student life is Question 34.1., which is used to capture the students' perceptions on the inclusivity for all cultures in social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU. In this item, only 17.1% of students strongly disagreed and disagreed to the statement "all cultures are included in social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU". Those who choose to remain neutral on this item were 30.7%. Most students agreed and strongly agreed (52.2%) that all cultures are included in social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU. Generally, students are of the view that the social activities organised by the SRC or SCC are inclusive of all the cultures, however, a significant group of students had neutral perceptions on this matter.

The distribution of results across item Question 34.2. also show an upward trend from students who "strongly disagree to disagree", "neutral", and "agree to strongly agree". This is apparent in that 17.4% of students "strongly disagree to disagree" to Question 34.2, while 35.9% of students chose to be neutral. The students who "agree to strongly agree" on whether student life at the NWU, PC are inclusive in nature make up 46.7% of the sample size. This indicates that close to half of the students have a positive perception of student life at the PC. Moreover, participants were asked in Question 34.3 if NWU students can influence policies that influence them (curriculum, policies about equality, residencies, admissions). The frequency table of this section displays that 14.5% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed with Question 34.3. A high percentage (43.0%) of students were neutral on the question. In addition, 42.5% of students agreed or strongly disagreed. The students, therefore, mainly were neutral or agreed on this question on whether NWU students can influence policies that influence them.

Moreover, the assertion that students can influence change implies that the university management allows students to see the university as a location to negotiate and be influential. To confirm this perception since the #hashtag movements of 2015, a statement was added on students' power to influence policy changes in Question 34.4. The distribution strongly points towards students agreeing to strongly agreeing with a response, measurement of 60.8%, while almost a third (29.3%) are neutral. Only 10% of students strongly disagreed to disagreed to the statement on Question 34.4. The perceptions of students on this issue suggests a neutral to quite a positive attitude on whether students have the power to influence policy.

Question 34.5, which states that the NWU involve students in transformational projects, activities and initiatives that had been initiated to create a culture of equality and non-racialism, tells us whether student life at the NWU is positively transforming. The frequency table shows that students who strongly disagreed or disagreed made up 15.9% of the sample. The neutral response was 43%. Those who agreed that the NWU involve students in transformation projects stood at 41.1%. Again, it seems that students are neutral to positive about the involvement of students in transformational projects, whilst a small minority disagreed with the statement.

Question 34.6 asked whether students understood that the culture of the residence on the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is inclusive of all groups. The students who strongly disagree or disagreed constituted 22.6% of the sample. The students with a neutral response on the issue of residency culture being inclusive made up 33.7%. The students who agreed or strongly agreed was 43.7%. This means that there is a neutral to positive understanding of inclusivity of all groups in residencies. Question 34.7. states that the student leadership represents the students' views and preferences. The distribution displayed on the frequency table suggests that a large contingent of students choose neutral response on this statement, making up half (50,4%) of the sample. In contrast, 19,6% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed to the statement that student leadership represents their views, while 30% of students agreed to strongly agreed on this statement. Students, therefore, agree more than disagree, but in the main provided neutral responses.

The second last item was designed to capture the perspective of race on student life transformation at the NWU, PC. The statement sought to ascertain experiences of non-racialism at the Potchefstroom campus. In this respect 21.1% student's responses strongly disagreed or disagreed on their experiences of non-racialism at the PC. The distribution on the frequency table displays a neutral response of 31.9%. However, 47.1% of the students agreed or strongly agreed to experiencing non-racialism at the PC. The percentages of neutral and agreed suggests a neutral to positive perception of non-racialism at the PC.

Lastly, in Question 34,9. it was asked whether students experience political freedom at the PC campus irrespective of their political affiliation. The students who strongly disagreed or disagreed made up 15.2% of the sample. Students who agreed or strongly agreed constituted 39.6% of the sample, while the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed comprised 45.2% of the respondents. This means that students were largely neutral to positive about experiencing political freedom at the PC, irrespective of their political affiliation.

This study acknowledges that student life is a co-creation of experiences between the institution of higher learning (history of the campus) and students (background of the student). As a result, this argument re-iterates the dynamic relationship between agency and structure. Space, as stated by Goudeli (2014:124), is accepted as the context of where what is social happens. What is social in this context refers to the network of co-existing "things", which form different relations within a university. In this instance, it happens in the personal, political and practical spheres. What constitutes a transformed student life is the social activities within "space", demographic equity and cultural equality within the "space", as well as inclusivity and social cohesion to practice and experience student life within the "space" of student societies. Examples of PC activities that relates to this are the race week, culture week, pride movements and the SCC election campaigns, to name a few.

Therefore, from the frequency table it can be concluded that the largest part of the participants viewed the social activities of students within the NWU, PC as being inclusive of all cultures. The students perceived student life as being inclusive in nature and that

student influence and power to make a difference is respected. Furthermore, the experience of space provided for student involvement in transformational projects and the understanding of culture in residences is inclusive of all groups. Students further perceived the experience of representation in leadership, non-racialism at the PC and the experience of democratic freedoms. It seems the number of societies and the resultant activities on campus cultivate the reflexivity of students and offers possibilities of producing transformations through revisions (creating and re-socialising) of worldviews (Sundararajan, 2002:178). The purpose of student life transformation is to ensure that attention is brought to these differences at every level. Furthermore, the trend in this frequency table is neutral to positive about transformation, which implies that the coming together between the background of the student and the nature of student life on the campus changed to some extent in a positive direction over the years.

The number of students who remain neutral on the items related to the transformation of student life at the PC is significant. This neutrality requires further inquiry, to determine what neutrality means in this study. For instance, in statements in relation to involvement and representation of students on social activities or policies in relation to transformation and student life, most participants remain neutral. Furthermore, to determine how these figures are influenced and the environment in more detail, the embedded social consciousness must be engaged. The neutral percentages in the entire Table 4.6 demonstrates that, in the personal sphere, transformation awareness is limited. The NWU socialisation in awareness of transformation may be lacking here. However, those who are aware on the second level of self-reflexiveness are considerable. It is important to note here that the awareness includes the perception that students are able to influence policy and has the power for it. However, as noted in Table 4.4, students seem to be reluctant to move into that space of engaging with difference, resistance and processes of change and help on the fourth level to collaborate to co-create change. In this section of the study, the practical sphere is demonstrated as limited. However, it seems from the student responses that the university and the campus made strides in the political sphere with transformation at the PC.

4.3.4. Transformation perceptions in NWU Management Culture

Table 4.4. is a frequency table that provides insight into participants responses recorded on the question of institutional culture. As before, the rows contain the scales used to capture the responses of the participants. The frequency table below shows items relating to the accessibility, accommodating nature and integration of transformation at the PC. The following discussion provides an analysis of said items and concludes with theoretical notes on the discussion of the frequency table.

Table 4.4. Institutional culture

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Total		
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q35.1. I experience at the NWU an open-door policy for students (they are welcomed by academics and managers to consult them).	3	1.1%	22	8.1%	73	27.0%	113	41.9%	59	21.9%	270	3.75	0.925
Q35.2. I experience that the NWU embraces the diversity of its students' cultures (e.g. their languages, social habits, arts, knowledge systems).	9	3.3%	27	10.0%	86	31.9%	115	42.6%	33	12.2%	270	3.50	0.947
Q35.3. I experience the NWU to be respectful of my specific culture.	1	0.4%	29	10.7%	81	30.0%	113	41.9%	46	17.0%	270	3.64	0.900
Q35.4. I have experienced the NWU identity to be integrative – all sub-cultures are recognised.	5	1.9%	32	11.9%	111	41.1%	93	34.4%	29	10.7%	270	3.40	0.898
Q35.5. I agree with the language policy of the NWU.	20	7.4%	38	14.1%	87	32.2%	82	30.4%	43	15.9%	270	3.33	1.128
Q35.6. Buildings on the Potchefstroom campus named after people stemming from the Apartheid era is problematic to me.	62	23.0%	56	20.7%	80	29.6%	51	18.9%	21	7.8%	270	2.68	1.236
Q35.7. The NWU is not transparent in its transformation processes.	10	3.7%	46	17.0%	128	47.4%	62	23.0%	24	8.9%	270	3.16	0.938

The Table above summarises the descriptive statistics analysed from the question on the NWU, PC institutional culture. The first item in Question 35.1. is about experiencing an open-door policy for students (they are welcomed by academics and managers to consult

them) at the NWU. The item shows students who strongly disagreed or agreed at a low 9.2%. Those who were neutral were 27%. However, 63.8% of students agreed or strongly agreed. From the frequency table it can be assumed that the students experience the NWU to be approachable and welcoming. This may display a positive and upward trajectory of transformation.

Moreover, the following item captures the perceptions of students in relation to their experiences of the measure the NWU embraces on the diversity of its students' cultures. Students who strongly disagreed or disagreed with the perception of diversity are 13.3% of the chosen sample. Of the students, 31.9% were neutral on this question. Those students who were positive about their experience in that the NWU embrace the diversity of its students' cultures, is indicated by 54.8% of the students who agreed or strongly agreed to this. However, the fact that 31.9% of the students were neutral, demonstrates a sizeable part of the student body to be uncertain about this matter.

Additionally, Question 35.3 specifically asked the students whether they experienced the NWU to be respectful of their own culture. Only 11.1% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. On this item 30% of students were neutral. If an organisation embraces difference, it is not far-fetched to assume it is respectful to your culture. This is evident in the frequency table with 58.9% students agreeing or strongly agreeing to the assertion that the NWU is respectful to their specific culture. This item corresponds to the percentages of the previous item, indicating that students experience the general students' cultures and sub-cultures of the students.

Furthermore, Question 35.4 asked whether students have experienced the NWU identity to be integrative, meaning all sub-cultures are recognised. On this item, 13.8% of students at the NWU, PC strongly disagreed or disagreed with experiencing the NWU identity to be integrative. Quite a high number of students remained neutral on this subject, namely 41.1%. Those that did experience the NWU identify to be integrative were 44.1% - they agreed or strongly agreed. It seems students associate the identity of the NWU less with integration, but rather with accommodation of different cultures.

An example of the recognition, respect and diversity of cultures is further tested in Question 35.5, which asked whether students agreed with the language policy of the NWU. The NWU language policy is limited to the four languages pre-dominantly found in the North-West Province, namely English, Afrikaans, Setswana and Sesotho (Language policy of the NWU, 2022:2). Students who strongly disagree or disagree with the statement in the item were 21.5% of the total. The students who indicated neutral on this item were 32.2%. Most students strongly agreed or agreed. They were 46.3% of the total. The responses are clustered around students who agree. Despite the difficulties of having a language policy attempting to accommodate multiple languages, students were largely neutral to positive about this aspect of transformation.

Question 35.6. asked whether buildings on the Potchefstroom campus named after people originating from the Apartheid era are problematic to the students. The students seem not to view this as a major issue. Of the students 43.7% strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement. There were 29.6% of the students who provided neutral responses on this issue and 26.7% found it problematic, by indicating agreed or strongly agreed on this item. The naming of PC buildings from the Apartheid era appears not to be a key transformation issue for students in general. Lastly, the statement that NWU is not transparent in its transformation processes was put to the students. Deducing from the total students, 20.3%. of students strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, 47.4%. of students remained neutral on the issue and 31.9% of students agreed or strongly agreed on the question. The impression is that students are unsure how transparent the NWU is about its transformation processes.

In Table 4.4 (about the institutional dimensions of culture at the NWU) most responses tended to be neutral or agree and strongly agree. The perceptions of students in their personal sphere seems very much on the embedded level. The students' awareness of the NWU's transformation processes is limited. Therefore, the neutral positions raise a concern but specifically concerns over which stakeholder is responsible for the awareness and interest on transformation. For example, that students are not really concerned about the names on buildings, even if it stems from the Apartheid era, demonstrates a lack of the second level of self-reflection and the third level of engaging with difference, resistance and processes of change.

The fourth level of actively collaborating to co-create change with the help of connections and networks re-iterates the concern of where the initiative lies in transformation processes. This needs to be followed up in the qualitative research, since it is not clear why students are to such an extent passive about transformation at the NWU. Yet, a large body of students perceive that there is transformation at the NWU.

4.3.5. Transformation perceptions in teaching and learning at the NWU, PC

The last question is on the perceptions of students on teaching and learning transformation at the NWU. Question 36 is different in the sense that it requires students to think about their specific teaching and learning experiences within the context of their programmes. In the items of this question the scale is different from that of the previous questions. Students had to respond to whether they agree or not to the statements or are unsure or that it is not applicable to their programmes. The items in this question worked with the assumption that transformed teaching and learning would imply that students who were previously marginalised can embrace and recognise their own cultures, tell their own stories, study from African written textbooks and experience institutions based on African centred values (Du Plessis, 2021:54). The difference between African and Western centred knowledge systems is therefore relevant in the items in this question.

Table 4.5. Teaching and learning

	I don't think this is applicable to my programme		Unsure		No		Yes		Total		
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q36.1. I think the academic programmes on the Potchefstroom campus are globally competitive.	10	3.7%	95	35.2%	22	8.1%	143	53.0%	270	3.10	1.011
Q36.2. Module content is relevant to the South African context.	6	2.2%	45	16.7%	17	6.3%	202	74.8%	270	3.54	0.847
Q36.3. The academic programmes at the NWU are too Western and does not properly include African orientated knowledge.	24	8.9%	83	30.7%	119	44.1%	44	16.3%	270	2.68	0.851
Q36.4. The academic programme I am registered for includes content that speak to current social issues.	20	7.4%	23	8.5%	36	13.3%	191	70.7%	270	3.47	0.931

Q36.5. My classes allow debates and conversations which are inclusive of different knowledge perspectives.	18	6.7%	29	10.7%	29	10.7%	194	71.9%	270	3.48	0.931
Q36.6. Academic programme should be African orientated to be relevant for South Africa.	27	10.0%	62	23.0%	93	34.6%	87	32.3%	269	2.89	0.973
Q36.7. I have lecturers from different cultural backgrounds.	6	2.2%	33	12.2%	25	9.3%	206	76.3%	270	3.60	0.788
Q36.8. The curriculum includes content from African centred scholars.	19	7.1%	89	33.1%	36	13.4%	125	46.5%	269	2.99	1.040
Q36.9. My experience is that lecturers will tolerate all cultural views in my classes.	10	3.7%	66	24.4%	22	8.1%	172	63.7%	270	3.32	0.965

In this section, the first item-statistic engaging teaching and learning states that, “I think the academic programs on the Potchefstroom campus are globally competitive”. From the participants 53.0% responded yes, while 35.2% are “Unsure”. Additionally, 8.1% of students responded “No” to the statement, with 3.7% of students who felt that the statement is not applicable to their programmes. Most students were therefore in agreement that the NWU, PC academic programmes are globally competitive.

In Question 36.2., the scale is to measure the relevance of module content to the South African context in the programmes. In Question 36.2., 74.8% of students said “Yes” to the module content being relevant to South Africa, while 16.7% were “Unsure”. Additionally, only 6.3% of participants responded “No” and 2.2% of students indicated the statement was not applicable to the programme they were doing. The students experienced the relevance of the module content to the South African context overwhelmingly positive. In assessing whether, “The academic programmes at the NWU are too Western and does not properly include African orientated knowledge”, the following was said. Students who responded “Yes” were 16.3%, while 30.7% of students were not sure. Within the same statement, 44.1% of students have said “No” and 8.9% of students have responded that the statement is not applicable to their programme. A major group of students supported the statement, but a significant group was unsure.

The scale in Question 36.4 focused on whether academic programmes included content that speak to current social issues. This statement had an overwhelming 70.7% of students responding “Yes” while only 8.5% of students are “Unsure”. Additionally, 13.3% of students responded “No” and 7.4% of students felt it is not applicable to them. The statement in this item therefore had strong support among the students.

Question 36.5. states that, “My classes allow debates and conversations which are inclusive of different knowledge perspectives”. This item has an overwhelming 71.9% of students responding “Yes” to it, with only 10.7% being “unsure”. Only 10.7% of students responded “No” to the statement and 7.7% of students said it was not applicable to them. Also, strong support for this statement was expressed by the students. Furthermore, teaching and learning as a focus also relates to the diversity of what is delivered in the programmes. In Question 36.6., the focus is on whether the content should be African orientated to be relevant for South Africa. In this item, 34.6% of students said “No”, while 23.0% of student were “Unsure” and 32.3% of students said “Yes”. Additionally, only 10% said it was not applicable to their programmes. Students had therefore no uniform opinion about this matter.

Question 36.7 asked whether the lecturers came from different cultural backgrounds. In this item, 76.3% of students say “Yes” while 12.2% are “Unsure”, and only 9.3% of students say “No”. 2.2% found the statement not applicable to them and the programme they enrolled for. These statistics demonstrate that the students mostly agreed that they had lecturers from different backgrounds.

In teaching and learning transformation, it is important to establish whether the curriculum includes content from African centred scholars. This was asked in Question 36.8 and 46.5% of students answered “Yes” while 33.1% were unsure and 13.4% answered “No”. Only 2,2% of students indicated this as not relevant to their programmes. This statement had support among the students, but a significant group of students were unsure. The last question asked about whether students experience that lecturers will tolerate all cultural views in classes. In Question 36.9., 63.7% have responded “Yes” to the acceptance of different cultural views in the classroom. From this item, 24.4% of students are “Unsure” while 8.1% of students responded “No” to the statement and 2.7% of

students feel like the statement was not applicable to the programme that they are enrolled for. Most students therefore experience tolerance for all cultural views in the classes.

In conclusion, this section measured the students' perceptions of the transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU. It is clear from the above that most students experienced programme and module content to be relevant to the South African context, that it speaks to current social issues and that classes allow debates and conversations which are inclusive of different knowledge perspectives, led by tolerant lecturers from different cultural backgrounds. This speaks to a positive teaching and learning environment, open to diversity. Where students did not have a consensus about is the incorporation of African-orientated and produced knowledge in curricula. Students' perceptions on this matter are diverse. Lastly, most students viewed the academic programmes on the Potchefstroom campus as globally competitive, but a considerable group of students was unsure. This can probably be linked to their lack of knowledge about what global competitiveness would entail. It can therefore be concluded that, in their personal sphere, students do not experience tension in teaching and learning and that it fits with their socialisation expectations on an embedded level. In teaching and learning there are no factors requiring critical self-reflection that can raise students to the third level of engaging or fourth level of activism. It seems that the NWU established transformation processes that address concerns students might have had in its political sphere and resultant practical sphere.

4.3.6. Conclusion

The general perceptions of transformation in the NWU practical sphere exists in students personal (i.e. model of spheres in transformation in Chapter 2). The general conclusion from Question 32 is that students have awareness of transformation issues which are around discrimination and victimisation. In general, they can report that it is not an issue on the campus, or they do not have an opinion on it. Secondly, students display a behavioral tendency to remain neutral towards transformation issues. This behavioural tendency was anticipated; hence the quantitative phase formed the foundation of the study. Additionally, there were contrasts to these observations, hence further providing reason for a qualitative study to follow. This refers to students not being active in reporting

matters needing transformation, while also remaining neutral (the meaning of this needs further probing).

It is important to understand that transformation in higher education arises from the political sphere and is exercised in the practical sphere. The results in the analysis above demonstrate that student's relationship towards transformation is in the personal sphere and rather in the embedded level, which includes beliefs, values and attitudes. However, it seems a substantial part of the students are on the second level, which entails self-reflexiveness in their own experiences on transformation and being aware thereof. Students seem not to be engaged in the third level with difference, resistance and processes of change.

This holds for further questions. Question 34 analysed transformation in student life at NWU, PC. There are two tenets that are core to student life transformation, which are student societies, including the SCC and SRC, as well as student residencies. Residencies and student societies contribute to ensuring revisions of worldviews. This is witnessed in the neutral to positive (agree and strongly agree) perceptions of transformations through students reflecting on difference. In this section, neutrality as a behavioral pattern continues among a substantial part of students. In student life, it seems that students generally have an awareness of the transformation outcomes in the NWU, PC practical sphere.

In Question 35 on institutional culture neutrality to positive perceptions on transformation continues. On institutional culture students' perceptions are on the embedded level. This is possibly since the practical sphere of transformation is in the hands of management of the NWU. Students are isolated from it. However, responses to the statements were not only neutral but also to the positive side. This indicates awareness on the second level.

Lastly, in teaching and learning (question 36) transformation is represented as positive and the responses of the students indicate that an openness to diversity was created. Generally, students in their personal spheres do not experience tension. However, it may indicate a lack of encouragement from students to critically reflect on the conversations about teaching and learning.

4.4. Factor analysis

This section describes the factor analysis done to develop factors for the transformation of student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning. The factors undertaken in this section used SPSS. In this process, factors are analysed through reducing dimensions of said factors to ascertain the descriptives of a particular factor.

4.4.1. Factor analysis of items on student life

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 9 items related to the students' perceptions of transformation, measured with a Likert-type scale. The response categories were 1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) neutral; 4) fairly strongly agree and 5) very strongly agree. Principal axis factoring was used as method of extraction, because it is fitting for exploratory rather than predictive purposes, especially where prior knowledge about the variance of variables does not exist. The initial factor analysis showed that questions 34.4 and 34.8 needed to be excluded as their did not meet the minimum criteria for measurement (they were less than 0.6). The KMO test measured 0.867 (Appendix Table 1) and indicated that the sample size was adequate for factor analysis. The p-value (0.001) of Bartlett's test of sphericity returned a value smaller than 0.05, (Appendix Table 1) suggesting that the correlation between statements was sufficient for factor analysis (Field 2005:652). In the anti-image correlations, the MSA values exceeded 0.6 (Appendix Table 2). The total variance explained by the factor was 3.272% (Appendix Table 3). One factor with seven items related to student life transformation was extracted (Appendix Table 4). The factor loadings on student life transformation factor ranged from 0.462 to 0.808. The transformation in student life factor showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.854 (Appendix Table 5), which indicates that the result is reliable. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that the distribution was negatively skewed (Appendix Table 6). The mean for the factor was 3.30, meaning that the respondents held a neutral-to-agree perceptions toward transformation of student life (Appendix Table 7).

4.4.2. Factor analysis on items on institutional culture

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the 7 items related to the students' perceptions of institutional culture. This was measured with a Likert-type scale. The

response categories were 1) strongly disagree; 2) disagree; 3) neutral; 4) agree and 5) strongly agree. Principal axis factoring was used, whereby the dimensionality of the institutional culture perceptions was determined. With the initial factor analysis, it was determined that questions 35.6 and 35.7 need to be excluded. The factor analysis to create one factor was therefore done by using questions 35.1 to 35.5. The KMO test measured 0.812 (Appendix Table 8) and indicated that the sample size was adequate for factor analysis. The p-value (0.001) of Bartlett's test of sphericity returned a value smaller than 0.05 (Appendix Table 8), suggesting that the correlation between statements was sufficient for factor analysis (Field 2005:652). In the anti-image correlations, the MSA values exceeded 0.6 (Appendix Table 9). A factor with five items related to institutional culture perceptions was extracted. The total variance explained by the factor was 2.527% (Appendix Table 10). The factor loadings of the institutional culture perceptions factor ranged from 0.459 to 0.856 (Appendix Table 11). The perceptions on transformation in institutional culture factor showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.814 (Appendix Table 12), which indicates that the result is reliable. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that the distribution was negatively skewed (Appendix Table 13). The mean for the factor was 3.5, meaning that the respondents held a neutral-to-agree perceptions on the transformation in institutional culture (Appendix Table 14).

4.4.3. Factor analysis on items on teaching and learning

In the factor analysis on question 36, it must be noted that a different Likert scale was used (i.e., Yes, No, Unsure, I don't think this is applicable to my programme). That being three material options of Yes, Unsure, No. The initial factor analysis initially resulted in only questions 36.1, 36.2; 36.4, 36.5. 36.7, 36.8 and 36.9 being used.

Principal axis factoring was used to determine the dimensions of the perceptions of students on teaching and learning. The KMO value for this factor was measured at 0.780 (Appendix Table 15) which is applicable in this factor analysis, thus the sample size is adequate for further analysis. The p-value of the Bartlett's test of sphericity was valued at less than 0.05 or less than 0.001. This meant that the correlation between items was sufficient. In the anti-image correlations, the MSA values exceeded 0.6 (Appendix Table 16). The total variance explained by the factor was 2.453% (Appendix Table 17). The factor loadings of the teaching and learning perceptions factor ranged from 0.516 to 2.453

(Appendix Table 18). The teaching and learning factor showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.689 (Appendix Table 19) which indicates that the result on the perceptions of students on teaching and learning transformation are reliable. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests indicated that the distribution was negatively skewed (Appendix Table 20). The mean for the factor was 3.56 (Appendix Table 21), meaning that the respondents held a neutral-to-agree attitude on the perceptions of transformation in teaching and learning attitude scale.

4.5. Testing of relationships between variables: Gender and Race

As argued in the literature (Soudien *et al.*, 2008; Zondo & Makgopa, 2013), debates on the pace of transformation in universities in South Africa, the methods for transformation and which aspects to transform are ongoing. In view of this, it is important to investigate the relationship between the background of students and their perceptions of transformation. In this section the relationship between the students' self-identified race and gender and their socio-economic and geographical background, in relation to perceptions on transformation of student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning are investigated.

4.5.1. The relationship of gender and race with transformation perceptions

The students who participated in this study classified themselves as either Male, Female, Other or Prefer not to answer. As no students choose Other or Prefer not to answer, only the categories Male and Female were used in this analysis. Students could also choose between either as Black, White, Coloured Asian, Other and Prefer not to answer. No students choose Other or Prefer not to answer. The number of students who identified as Coloured and Asian was too few to be used meaningfully in an ANOVA analysis. The Coloured as 7.04% of the total was recoded to Black, due to the similar lower percentage of participants in the study with the same level of educational opportunities. Additionally, students who self-identified as Asian (1.11%) were recoded as a missing value as it was too small to make a significant difference in the study. This analysis used the Levene's test and t-test in SPSS. The Levene's test was used to ascertain whether or not the variances amongst students' gender and race are equal. This t-test was used to determine whether the differences between the means are significant.

4.5.2. The relationship of gender and race with the perceptions on transformation of student life

This research study does not have a hypothesis; therefore, these relationships are argued as observations stemming from the data analysis. Firstly, the relationship between gender and race with the factor on the transformation of student life at the NWU is investigated.

Table 4.6. Group statistics for student life and gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender_Recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceptions on the transformation of student life at the NWU, PC.	Male	115	3.24	1.073	.100
	Female	154	3.14	1.075	.087

In this group statistics, there are 115 male students and 154 female students with only 1 missing. The mean observed for male students is 3.24, while that of female students is 3.14. It is important to note that the male group seems has a higher mean than the female group. As a result, what is to happen is that the test must establish if this difference has any statistical significance. Below, is the SPSS output table of the test itself (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7. Independent samples T-test for student life and gender

Independent Samples Test										
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper

Perceptions on the transformation of student life at the NWU, PC.	Equal variances assumed	.017	.897	.760	267	.224	.448	.101	.132	-.160	.361
	Equal variances not assumed			.760	246.027	.224	.448	.101	.132	-.160	.361

The p-value for this Levene’s test stands at 0.897. This means that equal variance can be assumed as the null hypothesis that the variances are equal is not rejected. From Table 4.7 above, the p-value of the t-test is 0.448 and therefore there is not a statistical significance between gender in relation to perceptions of transformation of student life at the NWU, PC. It can therefore be assumed that male and female students do not have different experiences and thereby perceptions of transformation of the student life at the NWU, PC.

Table 4.8 below presents the t-test on the relationship between race and student perceptions on transformation in student life at the NWU, PC.

Table 4.8. Group statistics for student life and race

Group Statistics					
	Race	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceptions on the transformation of student life at the NWU, PC.	Black	139	2,97	1,197	,102
	White	127	3,43	,878	,078

In this group statistics, 139 Black students and 127 White students of the NWU, PC participated. The NWU, PC students obtained a student life transformation race mean of 2.97 for Black students and a mean of 3.43 for White students. This indicates that the perceptions of White students seem to be more positive to student life transformation than Black students. Below is the results of the independent t-test Table 4.9).

Table 4.9. Independent samples T-test for student life and race

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Perceptions on the transformation of student life at the NWU, PC.	Equal variances assumed	5,102	0,025	-3,499	264	0,001	0,001	0,454	0,130	0,709	0,199
	Equal variances not assumed			3,547	252,404	0,001	0,001	0,454	0,128	0,706	0,202

The p-value obtained through the Levene's test is 0.025 which is less than 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis that the variances are equal can be rejected. This means that the second row's statistics are applicable. In this row the p-value of the t-test is 0.0001. This is less than 0.05. There is therefore a significant difference between the means of Black and White students on their perceptions of transformation in student life at the NWU, PC. White students were significantly more positive about the transformation of student life at the NWU, PC than Black students.

4.5.3. The relationship of gender and race on the perceptions of transformation on the institutional culture

In this section, the analysis is focused on the relationship between gender and race and the students' perceptions on transformation in institutional culture at the NWU, PC.

Table 4.10. Group statistics for institutional culture and gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender_Recoded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Male	115	3.13	1.072	.100

Perceptions on transformation of institutional culture at the NWU, PC.	Female	153	3.14	1.054	.085
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In the table above, the group statistics for gender are displayed in relation to perceptions on institutional culture transformation. The number of participants tallies at 268 with two missing values. The mean value for males equal 3.13 while the mean value for females is 3.14. The values recorded in this variable display not much difference in terms of perceptions of institutional culture transformation. Table 4.11 displays the independent Levene test and t-test.

Table 4.11. Independent samples T-test for institutional culture and gender

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Perceptions on transformation of institutional culture at the NWU, PC.	Equal variances assumed	.017	.897	-	266	.459	.919	-.013	.131	-.271	.245
	Equal variances not assumed			-	243.426	.460	.919	-.013	.131	-.272	.245

The p-value in the Levene's test is 0.897 which is more than 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis that the variances are equal cannot be rejected. The t-test results of the first row must therefore be used. In this row the p-value of the t-test is 0.919. This is more than 0.05 and therefore there is not a significant difference between the means of the male and female students in their perception of the transformation of the institutional culture at the NWU. This can mean that the institutional culture at the NWU, PC is accommodating of all genders. The following table (Table 4.12) present the statistics for

the relationship between race and the perceptions on the transformation of institutional culture.

Table 4.12. Group statistics for institutional culture and race

Group Statistics					
	Race_Recorded	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceptions on transformation of institutional culture at the NWU, PC.	Black	139	2.95	1.138	.097
	White	126	3.35	.932	.083

In Table 4.12 above, the group statistics for race are displayed in relation to perceptions on transformation of the institutional culture. The number of participants tallies at 265 with five missing values. The mean value for Blacks equal 2.95 while the mean value for the Whites is 3.35. The mean values recorded in Table 4.12 seem to differ significantly. To test statistically for the significance of this difference the t-test statistic was calculated and is presented in Table 4.13).

Table 4.13. Independent sample test for institutional culture and race

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Perceptions on transformation of institutional culture at the NWU, PC.	Equal variances assumed	1.380	.241	-3.108	263	.001	.002	-.400	.129	-.653	-.146
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.138	260.411	<.001	.002	-.400	.127	-.650	-.149

In the Levene's test the p-value was $0.241 > 0.05$. This means that the null hypothesis that the variances are equal cannot be rejected. The t-test results of the first row are therefore used. In this row the p-value of the t-test is 0.002. This is less than 0.05 and therefore there is a significant difference between the means of the Black and White students in their perception of the transformation of the institutional culture at the NWU. White students have more positive perceptions.

4.5.4. The relationship of gender and race with the perceptions of transformation in teaching and learning

In this section, the analysis is focused on the relationship of gender and race with perceptions on the transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU, PC.

Table 4.14. Group statistics for teaching and learning with gender

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceptions on transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU, PC.	Male	115	2,94	1,164	,109
	Female	154	3,12	1,114	,090

The means obtained for males is 2.94 and for females is 3.12. This means both genders are generally neutral in their perceptions on transformation in teaching and learning. These statistics emerge from the participation of 269 students with one missing. In these 269, 115 of those students are male while 154 of them are female. It is important to note that there seems not to be a major difference between the means of the genders with relation to their perceptions of teaching and learning.

Table 4.15. Independent samples T-test for teaching and learning with gender

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Perceptions on transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU, PC.	Equal variances assumed	,111	,739	-1,270	267	,103	,205	-,178	,140	-,453	,098
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,262	239,675	,104	,208	-,178	,141	-,455	,100

The p-value obtained in this Levene's test, is high at 0.739, which surpass 0.05. This means the null hypothesis of equal variances cannot be rejected. The first row is therefore used. In this the p-value of the t-test is 0.205 > 0.05. This means that the difference in means between the male and female groups is not significant. It can therefore be concluded that males and females do not differ in their perceptions on the transformation of teaching and learning.

Table 4.16. Group statistics for teaching and learning with race

Group Statistics					
	Race	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perceptions on transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU, PC.	Black	139	2,90	1,200	,102
	White	127	3,20	1,054	,094

In the table above, the group statistics for race are displayed in relation to perceptions on teaching and learning transformation. The number of participants tallies at 266 with four missing values. The mean value for Blacks equal 2.90 while the mean value for Whites is 3.20. The values recorded in Table 4.16 seems to differ importantly in terms of their perceptions of teaching and learning transformation. It seems that White students are

little more positive in their perceptions on teaching and learning transformation than the Black students. To determine whether this difference is indeed statistically significant a t-test was conducted see (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17. Independent samples T-test for teaching and learning with race

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Perceptions on transformation of teaching and learning at the NWU, PC.	Equal variances assumed	1,382	,241	-2,140	264	,017	,033	-,298	,139	-,571	-,024
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,153	263,614	,016	,032	-,298	,138	-,570	-,025

The p-value obtained for this Levene's test was 0.241 which is higher than the standard p-value statistic of 0.05 which means that equal variances can be assumed. The t-test has a significance of 0.033 which is less than 0.05. The means of the perceptions of teaching and learning transformation differ therefore significantly between Black and White students. The White students are significantly more positive than the Black students in their perceptions of teaching and learning transformation at the NWU, PC.

From the above it can be concluded that gender differences do not contribute to different perspectives on transformation at the NWU, PC. However, Black and White students have significant differences in their perspectives to transformation at the NWU, PC. White students tend to be a bit more positive about transformation at the NWU, PC than Black students.

4.6. Testing of relationships between variables: Geographical and socio-economic background

This section continues to investigate the background factors of students and their relationship with perceptions on transformation at the NWU, PC. This section focusses specifically on the political sphere (geographical and socio-economic background) of students. These background factors are tested in their relationship with the perceptions on transformation of student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning (practical sphere). For this purpose, the Anova statistical test is used. The Anova test is used to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the population means between more than two groups. With geographical location students had to indicate whether they came from a Big city (e.g. Johannesburg/ Pretoria/ Bloemfontein/ Durban, etc.), Small city (e.g. Vaal Triangle/ Rustenburg/ Mahikeng/ Potchefstroom/ Klerksdorp, etc.), Town (e.g. Bethlehem/ Wolmaransstad/ Coligny/, etc.) or Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area. Table 4.18 present the frequencies for the geographical location in which the students grew up. Most students come from cities (64.1%).

Table 4.18. In which type of geographical location did you mainly grow up in?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Big city, e.g. Johannesburg/Pretoria/Cape Town/Bloemfontein/Port Elizabeth/Durban, etc.	89	33,0	33,0	33,0
	Small city, e.g. Polokwane/Vaal Triangle/Vereeniging/Rustenburg/Mahikeng/Potchefstroom/Klerksdorp/Mbombela/George, etc.	84	31,1	31,1	64,1
	Town e.g. Bethlehem/Wolmaransstad/Coligny/Kroonstad/Viljoenskroon/Vryburg/Standerton/Thabazimbi/Lichtenburg, etc.	59	21,9	21,9	85,9
	Village/Traditional settlement/Farm in a rural area	31	11,5	11,5	97,4
	Other	7	2,6	2,6	100,0
	Total	270	100,0	100,0	

For socio-economic status of family's household the following categories were used: Cannot or rarely provides the basics (has help from other sources, e.g. food parcels or social grants), Struggling to make ends meet (does not always manage to cover basic

needs), Just manages to make ends meet (cover basic needs), Living an adequate life (generally has what is needed in terms of food, clothing, living costs, transport, etc.), Well off (lives a comfortable, privileged life, but not excessively), Affluent (more than just comfortable, but not extremely rich) and Extremely rich (may for example have multiple cars, homes, travel opportunities – including overseas travel – the very best in clothing, technology, cars, etc.). The first two and last two categories were combined for the analysis since so few students chose these categories. Table 4.19 present the frequencies for socio-economic status of family’s household. Most students came from households that were living an adequate life or were well off (67.5%).

Table 4.19. Which scenario best describes the ability of your family’s household to provide in your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Cannot or rarely provides the basics – has help from other sources, e.g. food parcels or social grants	8	3,0	3,0	3,0
	Struggling to make ends meet (does not always manage to cover basic needs)	10	3,7	3,7	6,7
	Just manages to make ends meet (cover basic needs)	27	10,0	10,0	16,7
	Living an adequate life (generally has what is needed in terms of food, clothing, living costs, transport, etc.)	86	31,9	32,0	48,7
	Well off (lives a comfortable, privileged life, but not excessively)	97	35,9	36,1	84,8
	Affluent (more than just comfortable, but not extremely rich)	33	12,2	12,3	97,0
	Extremely rich	8	3,0	3,0	100,0
	Total	269	99,6	100,0	
Missing	System	1	,4		
Total		270	100,0		

4.6.1. Anova test on the relationship between geographical location background and perceptions on student life transformation

Table 4.20 displays the different means for geographical background in relation to perceptions on transformation in student life.

Table 4.20. Descriptives of Geographical location on Student Life transformation

Descriptives								
Perceptions on student life transformation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Big city (e.g. Johannesburg)	89	3,3034	,79008	,08375	3,1369	3,4698	1,00	5,00
Small city (e.g. Polokwane)	84	3,2126	,69048	,07534	3,0627	3,3624	1,00	4,43
Town (Bethlehem))	59	3,3680	,55278	,07197	3,2240	3,5121	1,71	5,00
Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area	31	3,3318	,56350	,10121	3,1251	3,5385	2,29	4,29
Total	263	3,2922	,68429	,04220	3,2091	3,3753	1,00	5,00

The total number of participants in this study are 263, with 7 missing values. The average mean from the table above is 3.29. This means that the mean of the table above displays the average response to the geographical location of students influences on the perceptions of students at the NWU. However, the descriptive statistic does not provide information about the difference in means per group. Thus, to obtain that information, the analysis goes further in the Anova table.

Table 4.21. ANOVA of Geographical location on Student Life

ANOVA					
Perceptions on student life transformation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,931	3	,310	,661	,577
Within Groups	121,751	259	,470		
Total	122,683	262			

The Anova test determines whether there are significant differences between the means of the different categories within the geographical location on the factor: Student life

transformation. In the table above, the p-value is greater than the standard $0,577 > 0,05$ which means that there is not a significant mean difference on this factor.

As a result, further analysis on the difference of the means cannot be made. The conclusion is that there are not significant differences in perceptions of transformation on student life and socio-economic status of background of PC students.

4.6.2. Anova test on the relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions on student life.

This section describes the relationship between socio-economic status and the student life perceptions of students at the NWU. What follows is the descriptive statistics of this item which initiates the discussion.

Table 4.22. Descriptives of Socio-economic status on Student Life perceptions

Descriptives								
Perceptions on student life transformation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet.	18	3,3333	,76068	,17929	2,9551	3,7116	1,57	4,71
Just manages to make ends meet	27	3,2275	,82851	,15945	2,8998	3,5553	1,71	5,00
Living an adequate life (generally has what is needed)	86	3,0764	,72998	,07872	2,9199	3,2329	1,00	5,00
Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	97	3,4212	,56746	,05762	3,3068	3,5356	1,57	5,00
Affluent-more than just comfortable and extremely rich	41	3,4983	,61538	,09611	3,3040	3,6925	1,86	4,71
Total	269	3,2974	,68713	,04189	3,2149	3,3799	1,00	5,00

Table 4.22 above displays options in reference to the socio-economic status in relation to how it influences students' perceptions of student life. These items above offer a cumulative mean of 3.29 which continue the neutral to positive trends within the factors in the study. Moreover, the following Table 4.23, assists in determining whether there is some significance between or within the groups sampled for this section of the study.

Table 4.23. Anova of Socio-economic status and student life

ANOVA					
Perceptions on student life transformation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7,496	4	1,874	4,156	,003
Within Groups	119,039	264	,451		
Total	126,535	268			

In the table above (Table 4.23), the most important value is the p-value. The p-value in this table is 0.003. This value is below the standard 0.05 value. This does not interfere with the analysis and therefore can continue. This also means that the assumptions of equal variances are not true. This value also implies that there are significant differences between the groups. The F-statistic is 2.405, the degrees of freedom is 4 within groups and 264. Moreover, the test of sphericity has a p-value of 0.76., which is more than the standard 0.05. This means that the analyses continue to the homogeneity of variances as depicted in the table below.

Table 4.24. Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Socio-economic status and student life.

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Perceptions on student life transformation	Based on Mean	1,523	4	264	,196
	Based on Median	1,200	4	264	,311
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1,200	4	233,832	,311
	Based on trimmed mean	1,494	4	264	,204

In Table 4.24., above, it is evident that the p-value based on the mean is greater than the standard 0.05., at a value of 0.196. The null hypothesis of equal population variances is

therefore not rejected for the factor “Perceptions on student life transformation”. As the p-value in Table 4.24, is greater than 0.05 it entails that the means can be analysed with the Scheffe test below.

Table 4.25. Post Hoc Scheffe test for Socio-economic status and Student life

Multiple Comparisons							
Dependent Variable: Student life perceptions on transformation							
	(I) Which scenario best describes the ability of your family's house?	(J) Which scenario best describes the ability of your family's house?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Scheffe	Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet.	Just manages to make ends meet.	0,10582	0,20433	0,992	-0,528	0,7397
		Living an adequate life.	0,25692	0,17405	0,703	-0,283	0,796
		Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	-0,08787	0,172	0,99	-0,622	0,446
		Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich	-0,16492	0,18986	0,944	-0,7539	0,4241
	Just manages to make ends meet	Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet.	-0,10582	0,20433	0,992	-0,7397	0,528
		Living and adequate life (generally has what is needed)	0,1511	0,14813	0,903	-0,3084	0,6106
		Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	-0,19369	0,14611	0,78	-0,647	0,2596
		Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich.	-0,27074	0,16643	0,619	-0,787	0,2455
	Living and adequate life (generally has what is needed)	Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet.	-0,25692	0,17405	0,703	-0,7969	0,283
		Just manages to make ends meet	-0,1511	0,14813	0,903	-0,6106	0,3084
		Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	-,34480*	0,09946	0,019	-0,6533	-0,0363
		Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich	-,42185*	0,12744	0,029	-0,8172	-0,0265
	Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet.	0,08787	0,17233	0,992	-0,4467	0,6225
		Just manages to make ends meet	0,19369	0,14611	0,78	-0,2596	0,647

		Living and adequate life (generally has what is needed)	,34480*	0,09946	0,019	0,0363	0,6533
		Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich	-0,07705	0,12508	0,984	-0,4651	0,311
	Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich	Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet.	0,16492	0,18986	0,944	-0,4241	0,7539
		Just manages to make ends meet	0,27074	0,16643	0,619	-0,2455	0,787
		Living and adequate life (generally has what is needed)	,42185*	0,12744	0,029	0,0265	0,8172
		Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	0,07705	0,12508	0,984	-0,311	0,4651

As mentioned above, to ascertain which groups have a significantly different means, the Scheffe test is used. The Scheffe test demonstrates that the means of “Living an adequate life (generally has what is needed)” differed significantly with “Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)” and “Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich”. Those living an adequate life were more neutral on transformation of student-life than those who were more affluent who were more positive about this transformation.

4.6.3. Anova test on the relationship between geographical location and perceptions on institutional culture transformation

In this section, the output window of the descriptive statistics for factor 2, institutional culture perceptions of transformation are discussed. The study assumes to an extent that where you grew up informs the type of perceptions you will have when you enter a different social realm.

Table 4.26. Descriptives for Geographical location on Institutional culture

Descriptives								
Perceptions on institutional culture transformation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Big city (e.g. Johannesburg)	89	3,4899	,70260	,07448	3,3419	3,6379	2,00	5,00
Small city (e.g. Polokwane)	84	3,5143	,73487	,08018	3,3548	3,6738	1,00	5,00
Town (Bethlehem))	59	3,6136	,61236	,07972	3,4540	3,7731	2,00	4,80
Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area	31	3,4581	,68546	,12311	3,2066	3,7095	2,00	4,80
Total	263	3,5217	,69024	,04256	3,4379	3,6055	1,00	5,00

Table 4.26 above displays options in reference to where participants grew up in relation to how it influences their perceptions of institutional culture. These items above offer a cumulative mean of 3.52 which continue the neutral to positive trends within the factors in the study.

Table 4.27. ANOVA of Geographical location on Institutional culture

ANOVA					
Perceptions on institutional culture transformation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,718	3	,239	,500	,683
Within Groups	124,108	259	,479		
Total	124,826	262			

The Anova test offers a p-value of 0.683. This value is greater than the 0.05. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this analysis assumes there are no significant differences between groups. There is therefore no influence between geographical location and perceptions of transformation in the institutional culture.

4.6.4. Anova test on the relationship between socio-economic status of family location and perceptions on institutional culture transformation

In this section the relationship between socio-economic status and perceptions on transformation of institutional culture among NWU, PC students are investigated.

Table 4.28. Descriptives of Socio-economic status and Institutional culture

Descriptives								
Perceptions on institutional culture transformation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet(has help from other sources, does not always manage to cover basics)	18	3,3333	,76068	,17929	2,9551	3,7116	1,57	4,71
Just manages to make ends meet	27	3,2275	,82851	,15945	2,8998	3,5553	1,71	5,00
Living and adequate life (generally has what is needed)	86	3,0764	,72998	,07872	2,9199	3,2329	1,00	5,00
Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	97	3,4212	,56746	,05762	3,3068	3,5356	1,57	5,00
Affluent-more than just comfortable and extremely rich	41	3,4983	,61538	,09611	3,3040	3,6925	1,86	4,71
Total	269	3,2974	,68713	,04189	3,2149	3,3799	1,00	5,00

Table 4.28 above displays the recoded items in question 8. The items selected in this analysis have a mean average across all items at 3.5. This mean value assumes that the neutral to positive trends on the factor continues. In this analysis, 269 students participated in the study with a single missing student. The Anova table below with a p-

value of 0.50 determines whether the analysis should continue as opposed to the analysis in the student life section.

Table 4.29. ANOVA of Socio-economic status on Institutional culture

ANOVA					
Perceptions on institutional culture					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4,565	4	1,141	2,405	,050
Within Groups	125,276	264	,475		
Total	129,841	268			

In the table above, the most important value is the p-value. The p-value in this table is exactly 0.05, which is the standard p-value for this test. This means that there is not a significant difference between the means. The test of homogeneity shows that the p-value relating to the differences is 0.076. This p-value is greater than the standard 0.05. This means that the Post-Hoc test is to be used to analyse which groups are significantly different. As a result, the following analyses is denoted from the Post-Hoc Scheffe test. Like the preceding tables on the Post-Hoc test, the most important column is the p-value column. The p-values of this Scheffe test are all greater than the standard 0.05 value. This means that there are no significant differences across groups.

4.6.5. Anova test on the relationship between teaching and learning and geographical location on the perceptions of transformation

An Anova test was used to assess whether the factors teaching-learning and geographic location were correlated. In this section, the output window of the descriptive statistics for factor 3 on teaching and learning perceptions of transformation are discussed.

Table 4.30. Descriptives of Geographical location, Teaching and learning

Descriptives								
Perceptions on teaching and learning transformation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Big city (e.g. Johannesburg)	89	3,3740	,60399	,06402	3,2468	3,5012	1,00	4,00
Small city (e.g. Polokwane)	84	3,4014	,46117	,05032	3,3013	3,5014	1,86	4,00
Town (Bethlehem))	59	3,3923	,50305	,06549	3,2612	3,5233	2,00	4,00
Village/ Traditional settlement/ Rural area	31	3,0899	,65568	,11776	2,8494	3,3304	1,57	4,00
Total	263	3,3533	,55190	,03403	3,2863	3,4204	1,00	4,00

The above table displays the descriptive statistics on the Anova test on the relationship between teaching and learning alongside geographical location in transformation perceptions. In this analysis 263 students participated in the analysis. The table above was recoded, and the “other” option was removed by means of recoding to a system missing value as the number was too low for analytical purposes. The means in this analysis supports the assumption for the factor the students had neutral to positive perceptions. Furthermore, the Anova test is displayed in Table 4.31 below.

Table 4.31. ANOVA on Geographical location and Teaching and learning

ANOVA					
Perceptions on teaching and learning transformation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,473	3	,824	2,761	,043
Within Groups	77,329	259	,299		
Total	79,802	262			

The Anova p-value is 0.043 which supports the assumption of correlation. This assumes that there are variances between means. The Anova p-value is less than the standard 0.05. However, the analysis can continue with the analysis of the table of homogeneity.

In addition, since the p-value is less than 0.05, this analysis assumes there are significant differences between the means of the groups. This statistic supports the assumption that there is an influence between geographical location and perceptions of transformation in the political sphere.

Table 4.32. Test of Homogeneity on Geographic location, Teaching and Learning

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Teaching and Learning perceptions on transformation	Based on Mean	3,211	3	259	,024
	Based on Median	2,903	3	259	,035
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2,903	3	244,983	,035
	Based on trimmed mean	3,214	3	259	,023

The test of homogeneity above has a p-value which is less than the standard 0.05., which is 0.024. The null hypothesis of equal population variances is therefore rejected for the factor “Perceptions on teaching and learning transformation”. This means that the Dunnett’s T3 Post Hoc test is the applicable test.

Table 4.33. Dunnett T3 on Geographical location, Teaching and Learning

Multiple Comparisons							
Dependent Variable: Teaching and Learning perceptions on transformation							
	(I) In which geographical location did you mainly grow up in?	(J) In which geographical location did you mainly grow up in?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Dunnett T3	Big city (e.g., Johannesburg)	Small city (e.g., Polokwane)	-0,02736	0,08143	1	-0,2441	0,1894
		Town (Bethlehem)	-0,01826	0,09159	1	-0,2626	0,226
		Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area	0,28414	0,13404	0,208	-0,0826	0,6509
	Small city (e.g., Polokwane)	Big city (e.g., Johannesburg)	0,02736	0,08143	1	-0,1894	0,2441
		Town (Bethlehem)	0,00911	0,08259	1	-0,2117	0,2299

	Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area	0,3115	0,12806	0,108	-0,0414	0,6644
Town (Bethlehem))	Big city (e.g., Johannesburg)	0,01826	0,09159	1	-0,226	0,2626
	Small city (e.g., Polokwane)	-0,00911	0,08259	1	-0,2299	0,2117
	Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area	0,30239	0,13475	0,16	-0,0662	0,671
Village/ Traditional settlement/ Farm in a rural area	Big city (e.g., Johannesburg)	-0,28414	0,13404	0,208	-0,6509	0,0826
	Small city (e.g., Polokwane)	-0,3115	0,12806	0,108	-0,6644	0,0414
	Town (Bethlehem))	-0,30239	0,13475	0,16	-0,671	0,0662

The p-values in the table above are all greater than the standard 0.05. This implies that there are no significant differences between group means. This means that despite the unequal variances, the differences between group means are not statistically significant.

4.6.6. Anova test on the relationship between teaching and learning and the socio-economic status on the perceptions of transformation

Alongside the analysis of geographical location and teaching and learning is the analysis between socio-economic status and teaching and learning transformation. As in the analysis above the first discussion of the analysis begins with the descriptive statistics.

Table 4.34. Descriptives on teaching and learning with socio-economic status

Descriptives								
Perceptions on teaching and learning transformation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Cannot or rarely provide the basics-struggling to make ends meet (has help from other sources, does not always manage to cover basics)	18	3,1032	,48952	,11538	2,8597	3,3466	2,00	4,00

Just manages to make ends meet	27	3,4286	,54326	,10455	3,2137	3,6435	2,00	4,00
Living an adequate life (generally has what is needed)	86	3,2915	,50403	,05435	3,1835	3,3996	2,00	4,00
Well off (lives comfortably. but not extremely rich)	97	3,3991	,58209	,05910	3,2818	3,5164	1,00	4,00
Affluent-more than just comfortable and Extremely rich	41	3,4983	,51122	,07984	3,3369	3,6596	2,14	4,00
Total	269	3,3630	,54283	,03310	3,2978	3,4281	1,00	4,00

The above table displays the descriptive statistics on the Anova test on the relationship between transformation perceptions on teaching and learning and the socio-economic status of students. In this analysis all 269 students participated in the analysis. Furthermore, the mean in this analysis supports the assumption that the factor contains an attitude of neutral to a positive trend. Furthermore, the Anova test table is displayed below (Table 4.35).

Table 4.35. ANOVA on teaching and learning with socio-economic status

ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2,647	4	,662	2,289	,060
Within Groups	76,323	264	,289		
Total	78,970	268			

The Anova p-value is 0.06 which means there is not a significant relationship among the means. The value is greater than the standard 0.05. It is 0.06 and so the analysis cannot continue. It means there is not a relationship between perceptions on teaching and learning transformation and socio-economic background.

4.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, the questionnaires that were obtained for this study were quantitatively analysed. Like all chapters, the introduction was offered in section 4.1. In section 4.2., the descriptive statistics of the demographic involved in this study was discussed.

Furthermore, section 4.3., focussed on the descriptive statistics of the perceptions of students of transformation at the NWU, PC. In section 4.3., the analysis begins with an understanding that the students at the NWU, PC have a second level understanding of transformation. This refers to the self-reflexive level of consciousness. In this instance, the focus is on the NWU, PC as the field of which transformation occurs. This level of interest has either caused students to show interest in transformation or choose to remain neutral, as per the trend in the factor analysis (section 4.5). It is important to note that the the high levels of neutrality can imply that a significant number of students experience transformational issues at the NWU on a first level basis of consciousness or just the opposite. In question 32, the assumptions made above are substantiated, while also acknowledging that the participance of students on all spheres of transformation is limited to the political sphere of the management at the NWU.

In question 34, the same trends continue as the perceptions of transformation offer a neutral to positive trend. This includes the fact that students have a higher second level understanding of transformation in student life. This is in contrast with the perception that students have the power and influence in the political sphere. In conclusion, first and fourth level consciousness is lacking in question 32. In question 35 (about the institutional dimensions of culture at the NWU), a neutral to positive trend continued. In this section, the student's awareness was more at an embedded level and shows the limitations in the NWU transformation processes. These limitations in relation to self-reflexivity, shows a void of responsibility as to who should take the initiative or to start the fourth level of collaborating, to co-create an institutional culture. In question 36 (about Teaching and Learning), there is a low-level self-reflexivity about factors to do with teaching and learning to raise a need to engage or collaborate. In this section there is a disconnect between all spheres which if explored could raise the predicament of what learning entails and the result of and benefits of higher education teaching and learning.

Moreover, in Section 4.5., the study progresses to discussing the factor analysis on the factors in the practical sphere. The tables of the factor analysis are found in the appendix of the study. These tables display the reliability of the trends identified in the analysis done in this study. Thereafter, the study analysed the t-test relationships of the extracted values in the factor analysis in section 4.5. It is important to note, that the analysis in section 4.6. only focused on gender and race. In this section, the only significance was

that more White students were positive about the current student life at the NWU. Moreover, more White students have positive perceptions about institutional culture than Black students. The same could be said about Teaching and Learning at the NWU, while there are no differences in gender.

The ANOVA analysis in section 4.7. focuses more on the geographical location of students and the socio-economic status of students at the NWU. In this section, the relationship between the practical sphere is tested against the geographical location and socio-economic status of students. The positive to neutral trend is common feature in this analysis as was witnessed above. There is no significance between geographic location and student life, so no further analysis is needed. However, there was a significance in the relationship between socio-economic status and student life. In this analysis, the significance was between students living an adequate life and students who are well off or extremely rich as well as those living affluently with students who are living an adequate life. Therefore, the socio-economic status provides a better experience of the NWU student life.

In the Anova analysis between geographical location and institutional culture, there is no significance detected. However, in the analysis of the relationship between socio-economic status and institutional culture, the p-value on the Anova the less or equal to the standard 0.05. Consequently, the test of homogeneity was conducted and the resultant Scheffe test as the p-value was greater than 0.05. From the Post-Hoc test, no significance was detected. Lastly, the analysis of the relationship that geographic location has with teaching and learning shows that there's a significance and that geographical location does impact teaching and learning. As a result, homogeneity was tested, and the p-value was less than the standard 0.05. From this result, a Dunnett's T3 test was conducted, and it showed no significance. There is no significance between socio-economic status and teaching and learning.

Therefore, the following chapter on the qualitative analysis looks to address the lacking levels of consciousness and the possible meaning of the high neutrality in the responses within the study. What is interesting to investigate in the following chapter is how the number of Black students has gone up on the PC, but they are still the least positive about transformation at the NWU, PC.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

This chapter's analysis is focused on the qualitative phase of the mixed methods study. Information was collected through interviews conducted among SCC and SRC members. These responses can be categorised into meaningful and manageable codes (Attride-Stirling, 2001:391). Once the coding is completed the researcher can extract themes from related codes. Thereafter, the researcher can integrate, compare and accurately process the findings. Yet, the qualitative analyses are presented as a follow-up on the trends and insights obtained from the quantitative analysis. These qualitative responses are therefore analysed and presented through themes related to quantitative research.

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 5, in essence, relies on the qualitative analysis of the themes related to the quantitative study's analysis. The theoretical model provided an interpretation framework for the quantitative analysis in this mixed-method study. This theoretical model is used to understand transformation in Chapter 2. However, there were findings in the quantitative analyses that needed further interpretations. As a result, the quantitative analysis was enriched by a qualitative phase in the research process. This section provides further discussion of interpretations, perspectives and the experiences of transformation at the NWU, PC. This is provided through the discussion of empirical findings in this phase.

This is linked to the theoretical model which identified the three spheres in which transformation occurs. Transformation in the practical sphere entails the need of the strategies of the practices of and the behaviour of transformation, based on worldviews, values and collective beliefs. This sphere is important for the outcomes of transformation. Secondly, the political sphere represents the "power" factor in transformation which is characterised by systems and structures defining the space in which practical transformation can take place. Lastly, the personal sphere represents the discourses of transformation. This is related to the five nested levels of consciousness, namely embedded, self-reflexive, engaged, collaborative and resonant.

5.2. Qualitative analysis of the main themes

The main themes of the questions asked in the qualitative interviews were identified within the quantitative questionnaire analysis of this study. As stated in the literature review, certain characteristics in the quantitative questionnaire and qualitative analyses converge or diverge based on both similar and dissimilar perspectives of the participants' experiences within the institution. As alluded to in the interpretation of theory in Chapter 2 and the objectives of the research study, this dissertation interprets agency and structure as important to the ever-occurring relationship between the agent (students) and the structure (the University).

This is crucial to transformation at the NWU based on the history and politics of the NWU. In other words, the diverging or inter-dependent characteristics of agency and structure are relevant to creating, transforming and maintaining the structure and its influence on the agent. The following sections present the main themes of the study and their respective sub-themes. Through these themes, the conversation will link perceptions of all three campuses together and speak of the transformation journey of the NWU and specifically the perceptions related to the Potchefstroom campus.

It is important to note, that although the point of departure seems to be broad, the main interest is in how students perceived transformation on all three campuses and how it therefore compares to the PC and the interpretation and objectives of the institution. In certain instances, the identified themes along with their sub-themes will overlap, as explained in the theoretical interpretation model of the study on transformation as in Chapter 2. The importance of these sub-themes from a research perspective is that they reflect perspectives which may not be or were not foreseeable in the existing questionnaire, in relation to the conceptualisation of transformation at the NWU, at the start of writing and during the period of writing. In furtherance of the model depicted in Chapter 2, these sub-themes emphasise a need for the contextualisation of transformation. As a result, the need for transformation on the different campuses would differ, based on the strategic context of transformation.

For instance, the analysis in Chapter 4 highlighted two important observations. The first being the need to further investigate the meaning, reasons and cause of the high number of neutral answers to the questions on transformations. The second is the difference in

the level of satisfaction between Black and White students in terms of race and culture and either-or influence on the practical sphere. This chapter deals with this briefly, in the context of the students' interpretation and perceptions of transformation at the NWU, PC 1) student life 2) institutional culture 3) and teaching and learning.

This chapter discusses what student leaders share about transformation from all three campuses. The conversation was set in a way where the interviews were a conversation about the NWU and specifically for transformation at the PC. No distinction was made in terms of how the interviews were conducted between campuses. The aim is to display this context of transformation at the NWU. The responses may differ due to the different settings of the campuses in terms of history, ideology, geographical location, socio-economic status, etc.

In Chapter 5, the constructivist paradigm is maintained through preserving the assumptions and perceptions of the participants through their own words. Furthermore, the phenomenological paradigm is acknowledged in the brief descriptions of the main themes. Therefore, the researcher illustrates the richness and the subtle contradictions of the participants experiences, knowledge and perceptions of transformations. The following section presents the analysis of these perceptions of transformation.

5.2.1. General theme of the study: Perceived interpretation of transformation

The perception of transformation from a management perspective is based on the mandate of the Vice Chancellors in charge at a particular period in the existence of the NWU. The NWU and the NWU, PC are therefore created transformation fields to the participants in this study. This occurs as the students coming to the NWU experience change in status, location, gender and culture. The important question, therefore, is from their diverse backgrounds and histories, what is their interpretation of transformation on student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning. The discussion to follow illustrates the divergent perceptions and understandings of transformation of the student leadership.

5.2.1.1. Sub-theme 1: Interpreting transformation Mahikeng campus and Vaal campus.

It is important to note that the common trend in these qualitative conversations had participants placing focus on context and experience. The SCC/SRC composition on each campus is different. They include a-political, political, activists and neutral students who just want to be in leadership positions. This realisation is important for how certain questions are answered.

Participants in this study seek to clarify whether the focus is on the individual campuses, the universities or higher education and the society in which they live(d). The purpose of these qualitative interviews was to delve into the interpretations of transformation at the NWU and specifically NWU, PC, following the quantitative analysis. The intention was for the participants to refer to what they perceive to be transformation in this context. Therefore, a participant explained transformation in the context of a campus as follows.

“Transformation is the very simple things we do to improve and evolve...I could say that transformation at the Mahikeng campus is a drastic change in value reform” (Focus group member MC, 2022).

It is believed by students, as discussed above, that there are things that can be changed and evolved, which create insecurity about being a student at the MC. The perception is that, unlike the PC, the environment of which they are a part of has more socio-political and socio-economic challenges than what they perceive at the PC. In this instance, the distance to and from campus and the available transportation to work late on campus is a challenging example.

It is believed by certain participants that these insecurities are what incites the “political protests” at the MC, these further include the financial exclusion they experience. As a result, they feel they will always be associated with protests for asking for an equal and timely distribution of resources against what they feel is “neglect”:

“Yeah, you have to analyse, especially when in political things, you analyse what kind of political tool you need to use in this political space. If you can solve issues through engagements, why don't you just do it through engagements? (Focus group member MC, 2022)”

The student representatives asserted that what is important is understanding the “*different personalities*” on each campus. Further adding, “*the PC is mostly a flight environment in terms of personality while the MC is more of a fight environment*” (Focus group member PC, 2024). The students on the campus are more politically conscious since the majority of the SCC members at the MC over the years have been from the political structures on campus and now it is the EFF members. Additionally, the MC is still very much associated with disadvantaged students.

During the VC SCC focus group interviews, SCC members interpret transformation modestly and almost with some independence from the PC and MC context. Although it is the youngest campus to the PC and MC, it is seen by its students as a calm and content space or environment for higher education. This sentiment was one shared by Prof Dan Kgwadi as he referred to the campus as the colour between the PC and MC. Therefore, and nonchalantly, they view transformation as:

“A process of metamorphosis, a process of change, a process of growth (Focus group member VC, 2022)”

Which is led by an approach that,

“Transformation is basically combating an uncomfortable situation together to suit the ecosystem around it” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

The quotation above refers to approaches about hardships which occur in the journey of transformation, for instance denial, anger and depression. These hardships are believed and should be followed by an institutional strategy which empowers and fosters bargaining and acceptance. In this case, institutional models of transformation should ensure integrative efforts to bring transformative change about, rather than conflating how transformation can be achieved by not allowing stakeholder bargaining and participation as alluded to in the other campuses. On this point, a Focus group member at the VC asserts contrarily that:

“We believe our management are doing enough, we trust the process (Focus group member VC, 2022)”

The VC approach to transformation is based on how the parameters of transformation are “defined” by the NWU. Thus, it is the managed process of transformational change. This process relates to the NWU transformation pillars, like the NWU student environment and the NWU governance systems as relevant to transformation at the NWU. However, as is the case in transformation matters, it should be noted that transformation can have unforeseen (latent dysfunctions) outcomes that could affect solidarity during hardships. Due to the complex nature of transformation, the belief by student leaders on the VC that transformation is the coming together in purpose of tough conversations, is important in the severance of transformative change.

5.2.1.2. Sub- theme 2: Interpreting transformation, Potchefstroom campus

At the PC, where the “headquarters” of the NWU is situated, there is a more direct and qualitative interpretation of transformation. This occurs due to how “advanced” the Potchefstroom campus is on transformation quantitatively. Therefore, the experience and context thereof are different. For instance, “no campus besides the PC, has better infrastructure, better perceived student life, better distribution based on race, gender, ethnicity and religiosity” (Focus group member VC, 2023). The participants in this study indicate that transformation on the campuses is different, in that it is lacking conscious awareness of the individual being part of a larger role in a democratic institution. This means the challenges at the PC arise from the lack of second and third level engagement in transformation. The assertion is argued in this study as influential to the cultural transition or merging of sub-cultures at the NWU, which is still not as visible as imagined it would be by the Unitary model.

At the PC, keeping in mind the whole NWU, the assertions about hardships in transformation are particularly evident from the repeated assertions by AfriForum to protect Afrikaner legacies (experiences and cultures) at the PC. These AfriForum assertions are not focused on creating awareness of the potential for transformation on the MC and VC for Afrikaner culture. AfriForum’s reluctance and denial of transformation orientated management is a relevant case study of hardships to collaboration and coalition perceived in transformational change. Thieme (2015:235) argues that collaboration and coalition are essential in consolidating and empowering institutional change. Therefore,

“Transformation is based on how personal experiences and culture around campus are expressed in a systemised way (Focus group member PC, 2022).”

The embraced perception by the majority in this focus group is the belief that the students belong to an interrelated community of other NWU students (a systemised way). This means that the individual student is part of the larger whole or role at the NWU. The quote above alludes a cognisance to the historical dispositions of the student, in relation to consciousness in one’s experiences and culture. However, the awareness of their relationship with the historical dispositions of the university in terms of race associated culture is lacking. Hence the personal sphere discussed in Chapter 2 about the level of consciousness to student transformation at the PC. These historical dispositions are considered as factors in this study that shaped the historical ideological, political and culture of all three campuses at the NWU. The PC, in this instance, brings together the different contexts of personal experiences based on race, culture, gender, geographical location, socio-economic status, etc, into its field. It is this collection of personal experiences in practice in a particular field, despite differences, that transformation is shaped in the student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning at the NWU in a broader picture.

However, there has always been a belief at the PC that the Afrikaner culture is a “way of being”, which means it is socialised since infancy and was threatened by the merger; recently it is threatened by transformation in general (Pretorius, 2017:36;40;130). For instance, the initial policies of transformation in the merger were still about language as a measure of cultural capital. During the negotiations for a transformation officer, the following conclusions were made as a compromise, to get a transformation manager to assure that the merger achieves diversity targets. Dr Tabane (Chairperson of the Councils Transformation committee) wanted the target to be 40% Black students (English) and 60% Afrikaans on the Potchefstroom Campus and vice versa on the other two campuses. But Dr Eloff wanted 30% black students (English) on the Potchefstroom campus. For him the 30-70 breakdown was about Afrikaans. These conversations occurred in 2009 and 2010 where the slow pace of transformation was still questioned. Dr Tabane stated at the time:

“I could not put my finger on what the previous transformation committee were busy with” (Pretorius, 2017:255)”

This conversation was in relation to diversity targets of the institution to drastically integrate an institutional culture that is transformative. Like Prof Dan Kgwadi and Dr Tufvesson, Dr Tabane believed the inability to stop alienation in every form and combat the dominant “way of being”, could turn uncomfortable conversations into passively aggressive conversations or moments of fear to participate. This reality is possible on all three campuses. Additionally, there is a feeling of “*racism*” in the cultural shock of a White SCC leader having to “*sit in a meeting where 60% of the time Setswana is spoken*” (SCC PC member 3, 2024). The SCC at the PC is aware of the collective balance needed between the “perceived oppressor”, which is White people on the PC being the “perceived oppressed” from a cultural perspective. This refers to transformation having a negative impact in trying to achieve acceptance over tolerance. This behaviour makes students feel as if they are speaking and the wrong person (uninterested, bias, confrontational) is listening. When probed, the MC SCC member mentioned the following:

“For example, when we mention in meetings our struggles in relation to Potch students you see people cross their arms; sit back on a chair; you hear whispering and chatting while you are talking” (Focus group member MC, 2022).

“There are pauses that occur during meetings and you feel alone as the person who starts these conversations” (NWU SRC member 5, 2024)

So ideally,

“Transformation is creating those spaces where everyone can just come together from all different spheres of life and experience who they are without being judged or feeling like a burden” (Focus group member MC, 2022).

These perceptions of transformation at the NWU present an interesting dilemma in this instance, as the MC feels that the shortcomings of transformation are hidden by the success of the PC. Emphasis was placed more on the distance of off-campus residencies and concern over the continued worry about financial exclusion, since the university stopped administrating NSFAS payments in 2019. This change has caused a delay in payments for allowances, registration and fees and has left appeal processes lagging,

thus continuing the insecurity of students. From a personal observation, the conversation was very emotional bordering on anger towards the perceived “slow” pace of change based on the above mentioned. The common feeling was that what happens at the PC must also happen with the same pace and quality in MC and in VC. This “slow” pace of transformation is elaborated differently on the PC. However, there should be some responsibility qualitatively, from a student perspective to be part of inclusivity in interpreting transformation through the willingness of students to voluntarily offer themselves to change.

“Combating the uncomfortable situation” (Focus group member VC, 2022)

The interpretation of transformation at the VC is based on the challenges of level two (self-reflexive) and three (engaged) of consciousness. The emphasis is placed on the “linguistic challenges” and how they are still a barrier to transformation. Additionally, it is linked to the lack of diversity in how the on-campus residencies are staffed with students in terms of race and gender and religious affiliations. At the VC, on campus residencies have more Black and Coloured students as opposed to White Students. The challenge above emphasises the fact that agency and structure do not transform at the same pace. Transformation may occur, but the rate of change is different between agency and structure. In this study, “inconsistency on the simultaneous transformation of agency and structure” is perceived as a transformation differential since past behaviours and beliefs do not fade as radically as assumed for policy changes to structure (Archer, 1995:145). From the agency perspective power dynamics, culture, historical context and institutional vigour can change.

Transition within the existing journey of transformation are part and parcel of the quantitative changes interacting and influencing qualitative changes. Although transformation can be or should be simultaneously qualitative and quantitative, it is unlikely that the pace of both is simultaneous. This is evident in the high levels of neutrality, the lack of consciousness of transformation and the many elements in the context of higher education that need to drastically change as mentioned above. The focus on transformation perceptions for the qualitative value of transformation is to outline the difficulty in the perceived simultaneous occurrence of transformation. However, it could perhaps apply if transformation is analysed from the position of degrees of

transformation. For example, the NWU represents a fundamental and radical transformation which is systemised around two former universities transformed into three campuses, instituting the NWU. The mechanism designed for the NWU's growth and continuous change (i.e., The Unitary model) is an example of this transformation.

The observation on the Potchefstroom campus is that although quantitatively, 50% of students agree and strongly agree to be represented in leadership positions, there still are qualitative feeling/perceptions of residencies promoting tolerance and not a unitary identity. Student representatives report that those they represent feel that:

“You (the NWU student body) want to promote diversity, shouldn't you be diverse as well, the structures below you lack diversity as well as the social activities in student life”, (Focus group member PC, 2022).

The definitions of transformation differ by campus based on the participants' perception of change and general knowledge of what transformation is. Consequently, transformation is contended as inherently a response to need and that need has its own disposition(s). As a result, there are distinct features to transformation on every campus as participants have varying perspectives of transformation and the history of each campus contributes to said features. Participants on each campus face different challenges in this “transformation journey”, as alluded to by the Council of the NWU (Prinsloo, 2014). Thus, the following sections delve into how the different dimensions of the model of transformation in Chapter 2, differ and are perceived on the different campuses starting with the continuing narratives of transformation.

5.2.1.3 The transformation narrative of transformational issues

The transformational issues at the NWU are unique to its structure consisting of three unique campuses. These transformational issues at the NWU are more around the intercampus and/or intra-campus diversity, divisions, resources etc. This section is concerned with what the current narrative of transformation is on each campus. The importance of said narratives is stated as, by Prof Dan Kgwadi:

“As far as our failure to address the historical divisions of the past goes, I have always said this and I know it doesn't sound well when I say it: Mafikeng has always

been like, when you look at it, a tribal college, Potchefstroom is the Volkstaat while the Vaal campus is the colour between the two” (Pretorius 2017:275).

Participants in the focus groups still perceive divisive elements between the three campuses, particularly the PC and MC of the NWU. The division between the two campuses concerns both the political history of and the cultural aspects on both campuses. These divisive elements act as a differential from a perspective of the larger whole. More importantly, this reality is primarily true as students are socialised into a social realm (campus) which reproduces inequality when stressed or perceives stress (basically when things go wrong). To an extent, one can assume these divisions and mental beings have become a case of power and capital hence the assertion from the MC of:

“We don’t know what it is like to be an NWU student (SRC member 3, 2022)”

This refers to the challenges faced on each campus and the perceived urgency on the institutional office at the PC to deal with said issues, as opposed to the MC (i.e., finances, student support, infrastructure). Student representatives allude to students not seeing the two campuses as equal and feel as though the PC is a dominant campus. These issues were also a major factor during the merger negotiations.

“As much as I believe that there is transformation, I believe it is not to the best of our (NWU SCC/SRC and management) abilities”. (SRC member 9, MC, 2022)

Additionally, it refers to perceived convenience afforded to students on the PC. The MC’s perception of the PC campus is still very much frozen on being more advantaged and developed, hence the emphasis of the MC on “being dominated by the PC” (SRC member 3, 2022). The result thereof is a practice to resist or make life difficult for the PC, from the MC, as witnessed in the refusal by MC SCC members to be interviewed for this study. When probed, the assertion from one of the student representatives at the NWU was that:

“We represent students, but we are also ambassadors of the NWU, thus we cannot put the reputation of the NWU at disrepute (SRC member 4, 2024)”.

This statement alludes to students being afraid of saying something that could be perceived as negative towards the NWU. Additionally, there is a belief that the VC is

closer to being part of the NWU, as it is historically aligned with the PC (Prinsloo, 2016:142). These general tensions are believed to be challenging to the NWU. The unavailability of certain members of the MC SCC to participate in this study makes it difficult to confirm the alleged assumption as per a phone call stating that her members *“are not interested in talking to me and don’t want me to come back”* to the MC for interviews (SRC member 4, 2024). From probing, it seems that the topic of the study was a challenge. This ethical dilemma is very common in conversations of transformation (Ismail, 2011).

Although the senate at the NWU refers to transformation as a journey (Prinsloo, 2016), it is however perceived to be void of the student opinion in its managed process, as witnessed in the NWU transformation documents shared for this study. The intent of this study is to obtain the perceptions of students on this phenomenon. On the MC, where it is felt that transformation is delayed, there is a group of students who believe in the journey of transformation. As stated in Kamsteeg (2011:53), the norm has been breached with reference to the unequal distribution of resources among the three campuses as seen on the MC. Therefore, there is hope in how far the campus has come from what it previously was:

“Cause when we talk about transformation, we talk of change...that happens over time on something of which perhaps has been looked into always - to ensure that we evolve” (Focus group member MC, 2022).

Moreover, the VC still feels as though the divide by race and culture cannot be breached as a subset of White students have alienated themselves from campus life (Focus group member VC, 2022). Some student representatives insisted it included the delayed challenges of transformation like “decolonising the education system” and the “financial exclusion” of students which is a global crisis in higher education (Focus group member VC, 2022). The global crisis is that most countries are struggling with funding higher education in its entirety.

5.3. Transformation and student life

Transformation at the NWU was concerned with the measurables of the intended merger and the stability of all three campuses and the three-campus models of Dr Eloff. Diversity

served in this instance to de-radicalise and de-racialise the NWU campuses to bring about a more stable and moderate political climate, while advocating for tolerance (Prinsloo, 2016:54). Diversity addressed the race issue on the PC and VC but not on the MC. Although transformation meant for Prof Kgwadi, a unification model for the NWU, certain elements of the Dr Eloff era persisted. It does not persist as a result of management but deep and embedded dispositions (beliefs, knowledge concepts, values, understanding and identity). As such, through quantitative data and qualitative narratives, the attempt is to bring life to the conversation of qualitative transformation.

Therefore, it is important to note that this study is not grounded on Bordieuan theory but just borrows its theoretical tools to better interpret the empirical data. In analysing student life transformation at the NWU, the main protagonist in Bourdieu's toolkit is the theory of practice. As argued by Webb, Burke, Nichols, Roberts, Stahl, Threadgold and Wilkinson (2017:4-5), practice is not only what people do, but also an interaction within the social space (student life), its dispositions, its values and the capitals in that space. Practice, in this instance, refers to what is cultural and assumed to reflect a "way of life" which is social or constructed in the fields of practice.

As such, practice can be understood as comprising of habitus, capital and field. In the context of higher education as a field, practice contributes to the reproduction and representation of disadvantage and advantage through habitus. This habitus comprises culture and the symbolic values of how the assumed advantages or disadvantages compares individuals to others. For instance, the t-test analysis in Chapter 4 displayed more satisfaction of student life on the PC based on race, with more White students being satisfied as compared to Black students. This also includes differences in satisfaction based on socio-economic status. In this section, the argument is that perceptions of students as well as the interpretations of said perceptions, actions and practices are founded on habitus.

5.3.1. Student life as a sub-theme to critical narratives of transformation

Student life serves an integral part of practice. It encompasses, in relation to the NWU, student residencies, social activities, culture, policies, participation and representation as interconnected student experiences. Essential to our understanding of practice in line with the above mentioned, the use of habitus is important. For instance, in section 5.4.1, this

study argues that there are archetypes that migrate to the NWU to converge as an NWU identity. Due to the various natures of students who converge at the NWU, habitus is central to interpreting and analysing perceptions in student life transformation. Student life further represents the social, political, cultural, geographical and economic context in which higher education can be experienced. This study does not dispute the transformation fact of the “whole” but seeks to interpret an understanding of transformation from the perspective of the individual within the whole.

Moreover, it is of importance to this analysis to also mention that the baseline perception of the field from the quantitative questionnaire displays that 46.7% of students agree and strongly agree to student life being inclusive, while 43.7% of students agree and strongly agree to understanding culture at the PC to be inclusive of all groups. Also, 47.1% of students agree to strongly agree that they have experienced non-racialism at the PC. It is important to also note that all three items in the quantitative questionnaire have appreciable levels of neutrality, therefore, it cannot be assumed that the difference between those who agree to strongly agree and those disagree and strongly disagree is significant to a point that it implies disagreement or agreement.

This empirical information is vital to understanding the perceptions of students. The formation of habitus and its impact or influence on student life experiences as they converge at the PC involve both empirical and theoretical perspectives. In this section, it occurs in two ways. The first is the way in which perceptions are understood through enculturation as it is socialised within actors from birth. Wacquant (2005:316), asserts that this primary socialisation is how long-lasting dispositions and structured capacities to think, feel, act, speak and behave in particular ways are instilled. This he refers to as the primary habitus which shapes an actor’s taste perspectives, actions and interests. Secondly, the secondary habitus relies on the primary habitus as its foundation. This is the internalised, never forgotten and constantly reproduced histories, traditions, structures, etc.

At the NWU, for instance, the secondary habitus is reproduced in student life through culture, language and social activities. It is further reproduced through value chains of student life like on-campus residencies. When student representatives at the PC were

probed on this observation, they interpreted it as though their responsibilities in office are to;

“Maintain traditions, protect traditions” (SCC PC member 1, 2024)

This belief, since the earlier conversations of transformation at the NWU, was linked to language, or as this study refers to as race-associated cultures. In an article written on the Afri-Forum Youth website (2022), Afri-Forum sent a formal application on the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), to ascertain information about the language policy and admission policy of the NWU as well as the use of Afrikaans on the PC. The assertion is, *“Afrikaans students’ money is good enough-but their language is being phased out under the guise of transformation”*. This they refer to as *“to anglicise”*. Furthermore, the belief is that there is a transformation agenda pushed *“at the expense of Afrikaans on the Potchefstroom campus”*. The PAIA was to ascertain decisive information to present to alumni and students who are assumed to allegedly be funding the PC as donors. Lastly, the request was for data on number of lecturers appointed since 2020 who are fluent in Afrikaans, the percentage of classes taught in Afrikaans and the admissions policy at residencies based on race.

When probed further, student representatives asserted that *“certain White students still come to Potch to relive the culture and experiences of previous family members” (SCC PC member 1, 2024)*. This is challenging because *“the traditions some want to relive, kinder offends others” (SCC member 1, 4, 2024)*. When asked if this challenge is something the student representatives are confident about transforming or adapting, it was asserted that:

“The biggest challenge is that the campus has plus minus 24 000 students but 5000 or 6000 of them are residency students” (SCC PC member 5, 2024).

“So?”(interviewer)...

“Okay, so, first of all, you (referring to the interviewer) are saying that the core of student life is residency culture and social activities, (Yes, interviewer), the 50/50 policy in residencies is mixed but essentially 70% Afrikaans speaking students (SCC PC member 5, 2024)”.

“Which means that student activities stemming from student life include and not accommodate all 24 000 students, so the challenge is how to include and accommodate off campus students (SCC PC member 5, 2024)”

The collective perspectives and narratives on all three campuses at the NWU offer in their own way, one critical point in transformation in student life. That is, participation. At the PC, the statement in question 34.1, “social activities organised by the SRC/SCC at the NWU are inclusive for all cultures” and 34.5, “NWU involves students in transformational projects and initiatives” is of particular interest to participation. In these items, 52.2% and 41% of students agree or strongly agree respectively. However, the high neutrality values persist. They assert;

“Its not that deep, some students just want to keep to themselves” (SCC PC member 2, 2024).

While another student representative on the same campus asserts that;

“I think its representation, if that is selective, I think the problem will continue (SCC PC member 4, 2024)”

Moreover, two core factors contribute to a student life culture that assumes a bridge between the university where transformation is positioned to address the social, economic, cultural and political challenges of government and students (going back into society) in terms of development and growth. Therefore, radical revisions of worldviews in the student societies on NWU campuses as well as residencies at the NWU are crucial to student life transformation. Additionally, this approach is more likely to improve the levels on consciousness in transformation. It is the argument in this study that student life can be designed and deemed a major strategic foundation for social cohesion and solidarity across the NWU. Student life in that regard contributes to the culture of the institution.

5.3.2. Race, an actor in student life transformation

Transformation at the NWU and that of the PC was not only about numbers, but the cultivation of a space accommodating difference. This is based on the “self-evident and undeniable reality in the Unitary model and that there are Asians, Coloureds, Africans

and Whites in South Africa. It is a reality precisely because each of these races has their own heritage, behaviours, ideas, symbols, culture, language, customs and traditions” (Yacoob 1985: 47). These different archetypes migrate to and converge into what is interpreted as an NWU transformed student life identity. From Chapter 4, 46.7% of students responded that student life is inclusive. The t-test results showed more White students are satisfied with student life at the PC than Black students, while the qualitative interviews contradict this analysis. As a result, it is evident that there is a race related contrast between perceptions of transformational issues and student life from the perspective of students and their representatives.

Race as an actor is vital in understating transformation, as it places emphasis on some key aspects of student life transformation. Race as an actor influences representation from those groups who are perceived to be underrepresented. These key aspects include cultural inclusivity in a student’s sense of belonging. Furthermore, race as an actor can be a systematic barrier to intersectionality as a perceived component of the unitary model of the NWU. This refers to the student experiences, which are shaped by intersecting identities. These are important to the commitment to equity and access.

As a result, student representatives were engaged with regards to the high levels of neutrality and what might be the course. Neutrality in this study is the reason behind the argument of why race as an actor exists. Neutrality in this study is perceived by student representatives as linked to representation by race, culture or race associated culture. This transformation of the NWU has been part of the merger process in the realisation that the three campuses represented more than just hubs of tertiary education and business but markers of the broader objective of society.

Therefore, on either side of the quantitative or qualitative transformation, a transitional move away from just Blacks and Whites coming together and sharing space was needed. The most important factor of any institutional culture is the integration of sub-cultures for a unitary identity in the context of the NWU. As a result, a more qualitative and conscious need to resist the unconscious alienation of culture became imminent in the type of human relationships formed at the NWU. These refer to access, diversity, integration, language, habits, sub-cultures, transparency and symbols, which embody tolerance and positive experiences. Therefore, culture is indispensable in human nature, thus:

“Without Man, no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly without culture, no Man”, (Geertz 2011:36).

In this context, as also mentioned in the section above, it is the argument of this study that student life is the social action of students connecting and comprising institutional culture. Geertz (2022:12-13) further states that culture within student life is not only in the behaviour of student life in institutions and within individuals but also in the various states of consciousness. Moreover, the systemised way and the inclusion of students as participating stakeholders in transformation is important to qualitative transformation.

Furthermore,

“Transformation at the NWU as a whole tends to occur in silo’s”, (SRC member 5, 2024)”.

This concern exposed an often least considered aspect of transformation as a question to the SRC and SCC members of the NWU. As argued in this study, student life continues the repository function of an unchanged or a delayed change to habitus. This refers to the patterns of interpreting transformation and the symbolic dimensions of social actions at the NWU. For instance, the challenge of attracting White, Coloured and Asian races to predominantly Black universities. This point was elaborated further by Prof Kgwadi in stating that:

“...it is easy to call transformation access to “White spaces”, and opportunities for the disadvantaged but why do we have less and less access of White students to “Black spaces”? Is that not transformation (Prof Kgwadi, 2022)?”.

When the SRC member at the PC were probed on this point, the following was said in contrast by a student representative.

“Yes, but you can get a residence with 50/50 in terms of race, but an all-White House Committee (HC)” (SRC member 5, 2024).

Black spaces in this context are where you predominantly found Black people (MC) and White spaces refers to the spaces in this context where you predominantly found White people (PC). It is important to note that at the time of the survey for this study in 2022,

the number of White students on the PC (8 822) was just more than those of Black students (8 052). Moreover, the analysis in Chapter 4 displayed evidence that regardless of the high number of Black students at the NWU, White students are still the more satisfied with the student life at the PC. However, the opposite still applies at the MC and VC. At the MC there are minimal White students. On the VC, the number of White students continues to decrease from the former predominantly White campus.

At this point of the interview, the student representative was asked how social cohesion in the NWU institutional culture can be addressed, members of the SCC were left only with a context applicable to their individual campuses through social events. On the VC the students believe that:

“Here on our campus, we have something that is called Carnival and then we have art space...Arts festival is about bringing different cultures together; from international and local students (Focus group member VC, 2024)”.

When asked if that is effective, they say:

“We bring them together and we showcase each and every culture. And that way...every culture is included in our campus” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

“It promotes togetherness...we also have what we call residency culture. As much as you can form cliques of the residency, once in residency we put that aside and create our own culture that is unified, inclusive and beyond colour or language” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

On the PC however, we see an opposite reality to the conversation of transformation and culture.

“The one thing we are hammered on every year as the SCC is the RAG playlist and residency culture themes” (Focus group member PC, 2022).

The Rag playlist mostly caters for White Afrikaans students.

“We feel like we must transform ourselves to be part of them (White students)” (Focus group member PC, 2022).

“I heard one Black student say I am a White person trapped in the body of a Black person” (SRC member 6, 2022).

The MC does not prioritise cultural alienation because they are more worried about infrastructural challenges, food vendors on campus, the quality of education and an identity crisis of what it means or looks like to be part of the NWU (Focus group member MC, 2022). Their culture as they assume is that of struggle. However, it is the argument in this study that NWU transformation will mean a racially diverse campus, despite the challenges.

Participants in this regard emphasised a single definitive characteristic that defines transformation and culture, in a time where there are socio-political hardships and upheavals in both the qualitative and quantitative transformation phases. The approach to inclusion and access from all three campuses is different. But the definitive characteristic remains race and diversity stemming from it. For instance, the analysis in Chapter 4 alludes to differences in the satisfaction levels by race of the student life on the PC.

In conclusion, student life represents the social activities and participation in said activities of students at the NWU. These two aspects of student life are what enable social capital. Therefore, social capital in this stance refers to a network of integrated participation and activities which legitimise culture and identity. This network of integrated participation and activities depends on race, gender, culture, socio-economic status and geographic location. Social capital also determines what other capital students acquire within the field. The extent to which these aspects are to a reasonable degree cohesively integrated, affects perceptions and interpretations of practices within student life. Although the qualitative interviews assumed that *“transformation is on paper”* (SCC PC member 4, 2024), more than 50% of the students at the PC agreed to strongly agree to inclusivity of all cultures at the campus. Moreover, 41.1% of students agree or strongly agree that they are involved in transformation projects at the NWU, however, the qualitative interviews among student leaders indicated a more measured view. This participation seems to be highly restricted.

Furthermore, diversity is probably used for political means at institutions of higher learning. If this assertion is true, habitus permeability and fluidity will remain elusive to

transformation worldviews. For instance, student representatives recall conversations with stakeholders where students asserted that certain “White students” have tried to use student life to protect past traditions (SCC PC member 4, 2024). There is a belief, as mentioned in the conversations that “*certain portfolios*” should remain White to “*protect PC traditions*” (SCC PC member, 5, 4, 6). It is for this purpose that student life narratives occur as a sub-theme to transformation perceptions at the NWU. Integral to said narratives are, race, diversity and culture.

5.4. Transformation and Institutional culture

Higher education institutions in their nature can be perceived as the “field” in which habitus is practiced. In the context of transformation, the field involves primarily, the behaviour of culture and of the institution. This section interprets the perception of said behaviour and culture of the institution from the perspective of the student. Furthermore, the university, as the field determining perceived perceptions, actions, competition and struggle - all occurring through or because of capital. It is in this broader appeal that advantage and disadvantage is determined. In the new dispensation of South Africa, higher education institutions have attempted to ensure that the institutional culture of universities offer opportunity, equity (although undefined), access and the possibility to mobilise and utilise capital.

Capital in the context of higher education transformation is an important resource. As already mentioned, transformation in this study involves both the agent and the structure, however, with a differential due to the pursuit of capital, competition and struggles over mobilisation of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:98; Walther, 2014:9). This assertion presents a particularly challenging dilemma for higher education institutions, in that it must re-establish a new democratic identity, redevelop habitus while not reproducing disadvantage over power and influence. Power in this case is at its basic conceptualisation of one’s ability. In interpreting Bourdieu, power utilises capital within the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:98). To frame institutional culture in this study, institutional habitus is essential, and it is through Bourdieu’s four capitals that the foundation or characteristics of institutional culture are interpreted. Capital in this section is institutional culture as experienced.

5.4.1. Diversity in race: a character of transformation

For universities in South Africa, diversity is a desirable marker of democratic transformation and prestige. Diversity at this point is focused on what can be proven by quantitative targets at a campus and not aspects of accommodating humans by providing a diversity as culture, alongside personal beliefs and values (Blignaut, 2015:71). The SCC members of the NWU understand that what defines transformation at the NWU is that diversity is inclusive and offers equity without prejudice. However, the actual reality of a diverse institutional culture remains elusive from the NWU campuses as a whole and the MC (Ford & Patterson, 2019:99). This conclusion was derived from the assertion that “diversity is context driven”, versus the managed perception of transformation at the NWU.

The PC and VC approach diversity as a “culture of inclusivity” and use language, religion, ethnicity and race as a comprehensive measure for it. Diversity in this perspective is considerate of the social facts of culture and the varying characteristics of transformation. As a result, many patterns arise as conceptualisations by students on what diversity in transformation is and what objectives define it. Within institutional culture, there is still a pursuit of social capital based on tribe, class and community. The dominant interpretation in this regard is to race and culture being integrated. The responses were captured in the following quotes.

“a diverse student body is inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities, accepting and eradicates bias” (Focus group member PC, 2022).

“diversity is having all races integrated equally in a given space” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

“diversity means the will to understand different backgrounds and cultures and ethnicities willingly and together in one space (Focus group member MC, 2022)”

Besides diversity being about inclusion one student said ... *“diversity is culture, beliefs and norms”. Focus group member VC, 2022).*

The quotes above are essential in positioning cultural capital as an important cause for status and position within a particular institution (field) in higher education (Walther,

2014:10). Similarly, institutional habitus at the NWU campuses cannot be divorced from family, ethnic or cultural groups. This habitus in the context of geographic location, race, ideology etc, is inculcated in every way the institution defines itself. Furthermore, symbols like buildings, names of residencies, traditions, languages and lastly, through teaching and learning are also influential in interpreting habitus and/in relation to institutional culture.

It is the argument in this study that engineering consciousness of diversity can lead to social action and the interrogation of what the underlying dynamics are in the current South African higher education institutions. At the NWU, diversity on an institutional level is based on race, culture, geographic location, socio-economic status and the politics of language. The understanding from the SRC leadership is that diversity of a student body is beneficial in teaching the students that in the workplace and in societies in which they are to raise kids and build a life is a porous realm of diverse cultures set to dilute tolerance with acceptance (SRC member 7, 2024). This idea to dilute prejudice and bias only works to strengthen transformation efforts. This is important for the NWU, as 54.8% of students agree to strongly agree to the NWU embracing diversity. The student representative asserts that:

“Diversity within higher education prepares everybody for the new South African society (SRC member 7, 2022)”

For instance,

“the goal to push for 50/50 in our residencies was to ensure that we dilute the alienation of cultures to the point it does not matter, and one is unconsciously forced to want to learn about the other”. (Focus group member PC, 2022).

However, transformation also breeds fear in that there are student participants who believe that diversity means:

“Losing the Afrikaans culture” (Focus group member PC, 2022).

As one student put it during the SCC election campaign at the NWU residences:

“What will diversity do to our European culture” (Campaigner PC, 2022)

In this instance, the belief is that family, ethnic and cultural history and background come to the forefront of institutional culture transformation. Different interpretations are given for this. For instance, the NWU Management senate approved a 50/50 policy at the PC in which a student representative remarked:

“It’s mixed, its 50% Black, Coloured and Asian (English) and 50% Afrikaans”-the majority of coloured students speak Afrikaans, it’s more like 70% Afrikaans speaking and 30% English speaking” (SCC PC member 4, 2024).

At the PC, due to the challenges of transformation at the campus, part of the duties of SCC/SRC members is an “*audit*” (to review and assess social activity and traditions) of old traditions while developing “*new*” ones. Moreover, this policy directive to audit and maintain traditions displays transformation as not transparent (known) at the NWU. This assertion is supported by the 31.9% of students who agree and strongly agree to transformation being transparent at the PC. When probed further, two distinct statements were made in this regard. Firstly;

“a lot of the residencies at the PC manage and continue traditions of the past (SCC PC member 1, 2024)”

Secondly, a PC SCC member 1 and PC SCC member 5 (2024) student representative alluded that out of 29 residency leaders at the NWU, only four are Black, in explaining why there is a huge gap in representation in residencies in 2024, the response was that;

“There is a belief that student life will die if...you now, it’s not them (White students) in charge” (SCC PC member 5, 2024)

At this point, the interest in continuing with traditions of the past to have generational and shared experiences of the PC is a priority to a particular race at the PC. This perception is also used in addressing the neutrality issue in this study.

“Neutrality, I think..., is because of representation, which also contributes to the fear (not knowing how to belong) students have to engage or participate (SCC PC member 3, 2024)”

The belief is that if you cannot identify with a particular activity or feel at home in a particular space, what would the motivation be to participate? This practice, is believed, can influence the behaviours and attitudes of students regarding both student life and institutional culture. This is evident in the overall average of neutrality in Question 35 being 34.17%. This continuation of traditions also perpetuates the inheritance of positions within the field. Therefore, social and cultural capital in this instance is inherited and thus affects the student experiences in relation to institutional barriers to transformation.

For instance, the narratives above highlight an important question if considered in relation to the analysis in Chapter 4 of transformational issues and whether the 73% of students who do not report issues of transformation are within the 42% of students who take interest in conversations about transformation but face particular barriers. In other words, if 73% of students who do not report issues of transformation are within the 42% who are interested in conversations about transformation which is 30% of students, how true are the experiences of students in terms of diversity, integration, identity, respect, etc? To further clarify, they are those who do not report, do not participate although showing interest. Moreover, are the 73% of students who do not report issues of transformation part of the 32.9% of students who feel transformation is not a need at the NWU and are represented? The perception of students on transformational issues contrasts with the perceptions of students on transformation in student life. For instance, 52.2% perceive all cultures to be inclusive (Question 34.1) and 46.7% of students perceived student life to be inclusive (Question 34.2). The neutrality levels of students in the latter questions are above 30%.

“Students have given up” (SCC PC member 4, 2024).

The rumoured assumption that sponsors would leave the PC should the institutional culture transform, displays the economic capital one group has over the other or in comparison to another. In this instance, the repository nature of historical interpretations of habitus within residencies is detrimental to transformation efforts at the PC. The strategy to enforce a 50/50 split in residencies represented an idea of the rainbow nation that South Africa was promised. At the NWU SRC and SCC, there are still negative comments and some dissatisfaction about transformation issues in this context. This relates to the assertion that residency transformation is only on paper. The major concern

in the institutional transformation agenda of the NWU is the relationship between policy, the management and the residencies of the NWU.

This assertion raises concerns about stratification between students who converge on the NWU. In essence, a high cultural capital on one group contributes to neutrality in that it can ultimately influence advantages or disadvantages from a social and cultural perspective of transformation. It should be noted that the influence of politics on capital is not explored in this study but assumed. Moreover, cultural capital certainly influences perceptions and interpretations of positions within institutional culture.

In the context of the VC, diversity from a residency perspective is challenged from a social and cultural perspective. The challenge as already stated, is due to language and race. This could be, for instance, that;

“Some students believe that it’s a choice to associate, university is about individuality, get your degree and go...we don’t have to be friends” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

“We offer white students the platform (social activities), if they won’t honour the invitation we will not try anymore, it’s a choice” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

The thought that university is just like the society we live in is cognoscenti in the minds of many students. However, cultural hegemony within residencies is possibly transferable to student life. This cognitive dissonance encourages the efforts to operate in silos which affect the bottom line. There is no legacy and continuity built if stakeholders serve different objectives. This low level of consciousness is encouraged by the behaviour present on all three campuses:

“You mind your own business, and I will mind my own” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

In the analysis in Chapter 4, only 32% of students agreed or strongly agree to the NWU needing transformation in a quantitative study where almost 50% of students knew what is meant by transformation. However, student leaders at the VC feel like students and management are too concerned with the quota of race and language as well as socio-economic status, because;

“Diversity is not only race, or about what language you speak” (Focus group member PC, 2022).

Some participants expand on the quote by stating that diversity in transformation is a personal project (Focus group member PC, 2022). With references like “myself” and “to me” as well as “in my opinion”, diversity is a reference to one’s ability to show “ubuntu” to another. Meaning, “show kindness, acceptance, sacrifice for change” (Focus group member VC, 2022). When student representatives at the VC were probed on how “to show ubuntu”, the response was that it is only possible if you expose the colour-blind approach to “uncomfortable” conversations and debates about ethnicity, religion, etc (Focus group VC, 2022). This means that *“you need to have the race conversation as Black person, White person or Coloured person”* the same with *“religion”* and *“ethnicity”*. In this way, their believe is that conversations can be honest and progressive. However, the one aspect of diversity overlooked is “gender and sexual orientation”. *“We are still closeted in university”* a student representative reported (SRC member 7, 2022). The following section focuses on the diversity in culture at the NWU.

5.4.2. Diversity in culture: the character in transformation

Universities in South Africa are still grappling with issues of cultural diversity. It is important to note that all three campuses need to, in some way, give up the historical context of culture for a more multi-faceted identity. In the context of the NWU, this challenge is more complex as the NWU reality differed in comparison to other higher education institutions. This may be due to the insecurity of the past or the legacy it has left, as well as the distance between the campuses (Cross, 2004:205). This refers to the legacy of inequality, discrimination and othering, which causes insecurities in cohesion or the risk of accepting change while feeling oppressed as stated in the sections above. Moreover, the distance between campuses creates escape paths of which the psychological habitus of culture can still be maintained.

Culture in the context of this study is argued as the symbolic dimensions which inform institutional culture. These dimensions refer to ideology, morality, policies, sub-culture integration, representation, etc. Moreover, culture offers perspectives on how students can form perceptions in relation to transformation at the NWU. Diversity as a character in culture for transformation refers ideals of vibrancy and richness of institutional culture

reiterating intersectionality and multiculturalism. This argument is supported by the assertions made through “The study of organisational culture through practices” which stated that 1) cultural character gives patterns of interpretation; 2) through these patterns individuals establish agreements and commitments of which; 3) they choose to participate as alluded in the section of transformation and student life (De Souza & Fenili, 2016:877).

These patterns refer to culture through models, symbols and values which are not subject to segregation from behaviours or actions. This is so at the PC, as students have reported in the quantitative survey that 43.7% of students accepted building names symbolising certain ideologies of the past (i.e Totius). However, it is challenged by the fact that the history of the institution or campus is not part of orientation of first year students, as a result, a lot of students are unconscious to the history or culture assumed. It is important to note that this study does not advocate for the changing of historical landmarks in an institution of higher learning, provided these symbols do not continue values and practices associated with them. To ensure that past traditions are not idolised the SCC is mandated to have “*tradition reports*” used to audit residency activities for the foreseeable term of the university calendar as stated by SCC members at the PC.

For instance, the campus referred to as the “colour between the PC and the MC” is also in its own way stagnant on diversity in culture. The concern from the VC rests on the culture in terms of ethnicity and language on their campus. A SCC member states:

“The dynamics and demographics are very different this side, when this campus fights for transformation, it’s to get more White people onto campus (Focus group member VC, 2022).

The perceptions coming from the VC students on transformation is much more progressive than most universities in the country, considering its dynamic (Focus group member, 2022). For example, although SCCs or SRCs in South African higher education have become politicised over the years, students advocate and offer solutions to issues without necessarily politicising every issue. Additionally, the trust and patience shown by the VC leadership with transformation at the NWU and the assumed political apathy at the PC are further indicators that the issues faced are less likely to turn political to a point where the academic programme is affected, as with the national protests in 2015/16 or

the protests at the MC since the #FeesMustFall movement at the time of writing. The student continues and say:

“So transformation for us is more linguistic based, in terms of the language policy, so in this regard, academic linguistic reform is that instead of asking a question in just English and Afrikaans, ask a question in Sesotho and Setswana” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

“An example of transformational change to us is through Carnival...it is very important to us, we want to see the different residency cultures come together as one (Focus group member VC, 2022)”

A similar perspective was shared at the MC on culture with regards to access and efforts to radically transforming the demographics at the campus. The SCC members attest that:

“Perhaps there is effort, which is done to attract different races and cultures, but it brings us back to the location of the institution itself. It is located in a place that is mostly Black dominated...it makes it difficult (Focus group member MC, 2022)”

As a result, the interviewer reminded the SCC member that the PC is also situated in an area where there are low numbers of White people but was a majority on PC at the time of writing. The student representative responded by saying:

“Looking in the past, at how the Mafikeng campus would do things especially at the beginning of the year (protests), I would say, perhaps it might be a turn off for other races and to say, I would rather go to the PC or the VC and so on” (Focus group member MC, 2022).

The SCC member continues to outline his response by adding that perhaps the culture displayed over the years is also a reason for why the campus is struggling to attract new norms. In trying to align policies for the NWU, a huge resource in addressing social cohesion in transformation may be affected. This is informed by the needed balance to control structures and agency in institutional culture as opposed to the control of individual actions by structures. Furthermore, the reluctance of society to transform its worldviews also permeates into institutions of which they could potentially practice and influence

doxa. To transform, structure and agency are interdependent dimensions, and none is more important than another (CRESPI, 1997:80).

5.5. Teaching and learning transformation

5.5.1. Transformation and curriculum decoloniality

The decolonisation of universities involves people or groups who were marginalised and “othered” during the apartheid era (Du Plessis, 2021:54). Black and Coloured South Africans felt as though they could not choose to embrace their cultures, tell their own stories and histories and be taught about African authors and researchers. In this section, the four capitals of Bourdieu become relevant not only from the perspective of the campus or institution, but from a global perspective. As a result, to run institutions by values and beliefs reflective of African culture, African culture must be able to access, own and explore capital (Du Plessis, 2021:54). It is important to note that the SCC academic office is not mandated to address the items offered in the questionnaire question 36. This relates to relevance, applicability, content or any other issue in relating to decolonisation or curriculum control. Stating that;

“Our mandate is mostly to liaise with students and the different faculties, speak up to department heads on behalf of students, whether lectures learning plan does not match the textbook, or lectures are not present, etcetera” (SCC PC member 8, 2024).

The national systematic knowledge creation challenges make it difficult to successfully ensure that “international intellectual spaces are decolonised, deracialised, de-masculinised and de-gendered” and inspires apathy (Badat, 2010; Soudien, 2008, Du Plessis, 2021). This was the premise of the conversation on decoloniality at the NWU. A VC SCC focus group member asserted that:

“When we speak about transformation, then we must speak on the method of delivery of education, the content delivered, the context of education delivered and the language to deliver the education”. (Focus group member VC, 2022).

This factor became important and was confirmed by the quantitative analysis as the individual items in question 36 were negative to the influence of coloniality on teaching

and learning and transformation perceptions at the PC. The NWU has a unique challenge in that, how you receive higher education makes its way into the conversation about transformation of teaching and learning. The focus group member at the VC alluded to the use of headsets in the classroom by stating that,

“We need to speak on the method of how to we receive education” (Focus group member VC, 2022)

In question 36.2., where the perceptions of whether the content taught at the institution is relevant to the South Africa context, 74.8% of students said “yes”. Additionally, 44.1% of students answered no to question 36.3 of whether the programmes at the NWU too Westernised are and not properly inclusive of African oriented knowledge. When these two questions were brought up to the student representatives, the response was as follows;

“Well, I mean, science is science, we are taught the same thing, because I’m from the natural sciences and science is science so I don’t know how you decolonise that (SCC PC member 8, 2024)”

It is also interesting from the frequency analysis of items chosen on this matter that students agree more to the fact that there is no influence of coloniality on transformation perceptions, where only 34.6% of students said yes to the statement that academic programmes should be African oriented in question 36.6. However, in decolonial transformation on the NWU the language policy stemming from the dominance of Afrikaans culture and English culture, in terms of language at the PC and teaching and learning because of South Africa’s past, creates an interesting conundrum. In certain corners, the conversations about language and transformation are not towards a unitary university or campus but a fear of being anglicised. Wa Thiong (1998) argues that there was a deliberate suppression of African languages and curricula to maintain the status quo and keep colonial structures in place and the apartheid advantage supreme. Although the biggest discourse of decoloniality at the NWU is the language policy, 46.3% of students seem to agree to the language policy. However, this statistic does not consider the context of which the language policy is applied. This refers to the teaching and learning done in English, Setswana, Afrikaans and Sesotho. When student representatives were engaged on this assertion, one stated that;

“The language policy is the language policy, I don’t know about being anglicised, but there is nothing we can do” (SCC PC member 10, 2024).

The participants on the VC believe to address the implicit racial divide, the decolonial challenge and addressing the language issue once and for all might be a solution as one state:

“The transformation that we fight for, is more bilingual, so it’s more linguistic based, in terms of the language policy and the decolonisation of the colonial languages in this regard which is Afrikaans” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

The student further asserts that they (VC) fight transformation in terms of:

“Academic (as in the content and context of learning) and academic linguistic reform” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

“I don’t want them to eradicate Afrikaans but to also uplift other languages and better serve students” (Focus group member PC, 2022).

When asked why linguistics and linguistic reform are linked to transformation, the student representative responded by saying:

“The campus fights for transformation in order to get more diversity onto campus and specifically because this is a black dominated campus” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

Language at the NWU is important for diversity. This is evident in conversations with Prof Kgwadi and the resistance petitions of Afri-Forum to keep Afrikaans on the PC <http://artikels.afriforum.co.za/joupuk/>, <http://afriforumjeug.co.za/pukblypuk/>, etc).

Therefore, to improve the student life and institutional culture as well as the teaching and learning agenda on all three campuses, language is essential as suggested by the Vaal campus in stating that:

“Instead of having a question written in English or Afrikaans, let it rather be that you can have an option to learn in the language you are predominantly strong in and receive your study material in” (Focus group member VC, 2022).

In an article on News24, Ferris (2017), asserts that spaces like the classroom, spaces in academic journals and spaces on the campuses are still influenced by colonial culture, which limits the creativity and the potential practice of curriculum transformation. All these spaces are crucial to academic programmes, module content, current topics on social issues and the diverse individuals leading said conversations and the representations of decoloniality. Students looked to decolonisation as an unchanged reality, some looked to as a symbol of inequality.

“Therefore, the class system or rather quantile system that fails to prepare students for tertiary education, is a consequence of a leadership that do not understand decoloniality and transformation” (Focus group member MC, 2022).

This statement has been the cornerstone of transformation on the MC. The students assert that management is not realistic in thinking that students who must travel an hour to and from campus, being taught by staff without doctoral qualifications and have to witness lectures, deans and directors without sufficient offices should feel empowered and motivated to study or assume their place or membership as NWU students (Focus group member MC, 2022). The concerning fact about the observations and narratives derived from the NWU campuses is that students display varying perceptions in relation to the value of higher education because of the unique challenges of their respective campuses.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the qualitative phase of the mixed-method study. Themes were extracted and thereafter explored in an integrated manner alongside theoretical interpretations. In section 5.2., the qualitative main themes were outlined. These themes involved the relationship between structure and agency and how their diverging or inter-dependent characteristics contribute to this analysis. This section still maintained its focus on the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU, PC. These themes served to elaborate or balance the lack of context in the quantitative questionnaire and the limitations of the study.

Table 5.1: Summary of Themes

Issues	PC (are the system)	MC (feel alienated by the system)	VC (believe in the system)
What is transformation	How personal experiences and culture around campus is expressed in a systemised way.	Students believe that transformation is a drastic change in value reform in order to improve and evolve.	Transformation is the combating of uncomfortable situations together to suit the ecosystem around it.
Transformation narratives	Dantes dilemma: How do you balance student interests with institutional reputation. “we represent students, but we are also ambassadors of the NWU”.	“we do not know what it is like to be an NWU Student” (SRC member 3, 2022)	White students have alienated themselves from campus life
Transformation and student life.	Habitus built over the years maintains and protects cultural traditions. Transformation is a danger to Afrikaner culture.	Refused to participate further in the study.	Carnival is how we create spaces for different cultures to create a campus culture.
Transformation and institutional culture.	Culture is inclusive through religion, language, ethnicity, race and should be considerate of social facts and the different characteristics of transformation. But also transformation of institutional culture makes it difficult for a White student to experience culture at the NWU like his dad	Institutional culture transformation fosters understanding of different backgrounds in relation to the field at which its practice occurs.	The believe is similar to that of the PC. Institutional culture is about the pursuit of social capital to foster integration. Language and race acts as a barrier and or excuse to deny or ignore invitations to be part of transformation.

	and uncles did in the early and late 2000's.		
Transformation and curriculum decoloniality	Student representatives need training beyond just being class leaders. This issue is always dominated by the language policy and whether it means upliftment or the end of Afrikaans or Afrikaners as a whole. Race week becomes very important.	Refused to participate further in the study.	Decoloniality and transformation is based on how we deliver education and the context of which it is delivered.

This chapter continues with the general theme of the study in section 5.2.1., focussing on the perceived interpretation of transformation. Therefore, section 5.2.1.1., captures the general perceptions of transformation. These general perceptions are based on culture and experience as well as the trends captured in Chapter 4. In this regard, transformation was defined based on the experience and context as well as the general knowledge of student representatives. These interpretations allow for some wisdom on how scattered the institution is on this concept of transformation. However, the difference in perceptions can only benefit the interpretation of transformation and the strategy thereof.

Section 5.2.1.2., contextualises the narrative of transformation issues at the NWU. This section begins with an “admission” of the fact that work is still to be done on transformation. These issues arrive from challenges with diversity, divisiveness and certain cultural codes being frozen at the NWU or its campuses. Furthermore, this section evolves into perceptions of representation and participation because of high levels of neutrality. In section 5.3., the context of the general perceptions and narratives lead into the practical sphere. The conversation comprises race as an actor in student life transformation based on the captured trends in Chapter 4. In section 5.4., institutional culture is analysed in the perspective of the university as a field in which habitus is practiced. To participate in this field, is to be part of the field, hence the need for capital. Capital in this instance is acquired through race, culture and the institutions’ ability to

make capital accessible through diversity. Lastly, transformation is discussed in the context of ownership through teaching and learning in section 5.5. The position of students in this regard is unavailable on this matter and could be problematic in terms of equity. The following section concludes the research study with conclusions and recommendations. The study alludes to potential future research for transformation.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The concluding chapter of this study seeks to put forward an end to the investigation and discussion on the students' perceptions of transformation at the PC. Therefore, what follows are the four objectives proposed in Chapter 1. This is then followed by the concluding discussion on the overview of the study, as well as the main findings of the study. Furthermore, this concluding chapter continues with the theoretical comments on the usefulness of theory in investigating and discussing transformation perceptions of students at the PC, as well as the contributions of the study. In closure, therefore, the chapter provides limitations and recommendations of this study.

6.2. Conclusion of the research study

As discussed in Chapter 1, the main objective of this study was to investigate the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the PC. To achieve this objective, the question, "What are the perceptions of NWU students on transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus had to be addressed. To answer this question, it was important to understand that there is no definition of transformation in higher education and the interpretation of transformation within higher education and the NWU is based on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Thus, an important objective arises, namely, to determine, 1) the nature of transformation in higher education and the NWU.

South Africa went through notable phases of abuse and discrimination during the colonial and apartheid eras. As a result, the past 30 years have been aimed at radically transforming every sphere of society through constitutional guidelines. Between the year 2000 and 2004, following the apartheid era, access and equity became a core figure in transformation. Consequently, universities were merged as higher education massification. In the context of this study, the merger of universities marked the first phase of transformation at the NWU. Part of the objective of said mergers was to address the inequality and disadvantage of apartheid policies. These included social, political, economic and to some extent cultural reform. In furtherance of the objective above, the

lexicons of transformation were emphasised. These dictionary definitions of transformation captured precisely the radical change of higher education and the NWU.

However, when applying conceptual theoretical interpretations of transformation to the NWU, it becomes evident that this radical transformation did not necessarily make a complete clinical break from South Africa's past. The NWU under the first phase of transforming was not as fluid, but also not less circular in the principles that kept South Africans indifferent. Therefore, the second phase of transformation took off with the objective of unifying all three campuses into a completely singular institution and not just by name. It is from this point on that the perceptions of students on transformation become critical to the NWU in effectively institutionalising this unitary model.

Transformation perceptions in this study emphasises the importance of structure and agency in both the institution and the students as a stakeholder. Therefore, transformation goes beyond the linear assumption of institutional transformation being simultaneous and authoritative over the transformation of agency. This means that transformation from the position of both structure and agency as important instruments will cause a differential in all three spheres of transformation (personal sphere, political sphere and practical sphere). Ignoring this notion from the perspective of the agent, through the interpretation of capital as a vital resource to access and equity, the study observed levels of neutrality and differing levels of satisfaction by race.

This research study is divided into two phases. The first phase is concerned with an organised inquiry about social phenomenon through the collection of numerical data. This is the quantitative phase of the research study. In this phase, a cross-sectional design was deemed as the most applicable research methodology. This allows for a study that would occur over a short period of time and is within the limitations of the study period. Furthermore, this research design allows for the use of surveys to capture the perception of students of which can be quantified at a later stage.

In the qualitative phase, the explanatory case study was used. This allowed for an in-depth and broader context on the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU. As a qualitative design, it seeks to understand a particular phenomenon as opposed to generalising the findings. It is due to the limitations of the generalised findings of phase 1, that this section became important. In this study, data was collected through focus

groups, face-to-face interviews and a single telephone call in a purposive sample. The interviews were in-depth but aimed at addressing the limitations of survey research and balancing out the generalised perceptions of phase one. The analysis of said interviews was conducted in terms of the patterns identified from the quantitative surveys and the themes coded from the interviews. Therefore, the approach taken for this study was the mixed-method, explanatory mixed design as the quantitative and qualitative methods occurs chronologically.

The collection of data, the analysis of data and the interpretation and reporting of results are in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. In Chapter 4, the analysis of quantitative data was analysed using SPSS. Within the chapter, the practical sphere was analysed. In Chapter 5, qualitative data was analysed based on the extracted themes. Within the chapter, the personal sphere in relation to the practical sphere was analysed.

6.3. Overview of the study

Chapter 1 provided an introduction for the study. In Chapter 1, the problem statement is discussed. The problem in this study is conceptualised as the lack of studies looking into the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU. This chapter offers an introduction to the attempt to add to studying the perceptions of students and their agency in transformation. The belief is that a lack of involvement by students based on the social and political doxa of South African universities may impede participation and equity for the student as a stakeholder. The problem statement is followed by the research question and objective.

The objective was to *investigate the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus*. To accomplish this, a secondary objective was stated, namely, *to inquire from the literature the nature of transformation and of higher education transformation in South Africa and the NWU*. This is addressed in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 consisted of a discussion relating to the theoretical objectives in section 3 in Chapter 1. The following topics were discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation: in section 2.2., transformation was discussed in terms of its lexical definitions and its definition in the context of higher education in South Africa. In section 2.3., the chapter discusses theories concerned with transformation: these being, interpretivist-constructivist, structuralism and globalisation transformation.

In section 2.4., a theoretical model on perceptions on transformation was discussed and presented. What follows from section 2.4 (modelling transformation perceptions) is the discussion on the transformation in higher education worldwide, before focusing it to the South African higher education transformation landscape in section 2.7. Chapter 2, lastly, discusses the background of transformation at the NWU before concluding with section 2.9. The South African Higher Education went through a drastic transformation in 2004 to address the inequalities of apartheid. In doing so, several universities were asked to merge. As a result, the PUKKE (with PC and VC) and UNW merged into one university that is the NWU.

The second secondary objective was aimed at “*investigating the applicable methodology that can be used to study the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU, PC*”. Chapter 3 detailed the research methodology used within this study to research transformation as discussed in section 3.2. Research paradigms were discussed in section 3.2.1. This section outlined the positivist, constructionist, participatory and pragmatic paradigms and outlined the paradigms in use for this study. In section 3.3, the research approaches were discussed. For this study the mixed method approach was chosen. This means both the quantitative and qualitative approaches were discussed in aiding the study to accomplish its objective. Each research approach was followed by the research design in use for this study. In section 3.4., the sampling strategies and sample sizes were introduced. In this section, the sampling methods (probability and non-probability methods) were chosen, and the target population was discussed. After selecting the sample size, empirical data was collected.

This process is outlined in section 3.5. In this section, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were explained. In section 3.6, data preparation and analysis were outlined. The discussion touched on both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected. Thereafter, the ethical considerations are outlined and the process of getting ethical clearance is discussed. Lastly, the limitations of the study are followed by the conclusion to the chapter.

Chapter 4 and 5 address the objective *to analyse and report the results of the mixed-methods methodology for the investigation into student perceptions on higher education transformation at the NWC, PC*. In Chapter 4, the quantitative analysis of student

perceptions of transformation at the PC was analysed. Chapter 4 includes an analysis on the main themes of the quantitative questionnaire obtained in the quantitative study. These themes included the descriptive statistics of the students' perceptions (section 4.3), factor analysis of student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning (section 4.4), testing of relationships between factors and gender and race (section 4.5) and testing of relationship between factors and geographic background and socio-economic status.

In Chapter 5, the analysis is on the qualitative interpretations of the NWU SRC/SCC members on transformational issues at the NWU. The themes were extracted from the data and interpretations collected that can help to better interpret the results of the quantitative data analysis. The main themes discussed are the general theme of the study, in particular the perceived interpretation of transformation (section 5.2.1), the interpretation of transformation in student life (section 5.3), the interpretation of institutional culture transformation (section 5.4) and the interpretation of the transformation of teaching and learning (section 5.5).

This chapter addresses the last secondary objective namely, *to make conclusions and provide possible recommendations that can be drawn based on the findings on the perceptions of NWU students on higher education transformation at the NWU, Potchefstroom campus.*

6.4. Main findings of the study

The main findings of this study arise in accordance with the empirical results reported in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The perceptions among students of NWU PC transformation was generally neutral to positive. The following subsections give more information.

6.4.1. Students on transformational issues

This study explored the transformational issues at the PC, by starting with whether students know what is meant by transformation. In this regard, 49.3% of students agree and strongly agree to being knowledgeable about transformation. It is from this statistical fact that issues of discrimination at the PC or discrimination before registering at the PC were tested in question 32.2 and 32.3. and this indicated that students overwhelmingly disagree to being discriminated against. Moreover, less than 50% of students are interested in the issues of transformation. Furthermore, students were neutral and to

some extent positive that transformation was needed. Based on the findings, two issues are salient. One being a question of how to grade success in transformation and the other of whether the high neutrality response among students a positive or negative trend in this studying perceptions of transformation.

Moreover, the perceptions given from the interviews also raise issues on the understanding of students on what the university is doing for them and/or should be doing for them. In this regard, the main finding of this study is the importance of transformational models needed in managing or leading transformation. In this study, the level of consciousness of students is important to awareness, participation, empowerment, desire, knowledge systems on transformation and collaboration. Furthermore, the high levels of neutrality without a working and transparent transformation model could be interpreted as uncertainty to the end of an old worldview and culture or an uncertainty to the beginning of a new worldview and culture.

6.4.2. Students and participation in transformation

From the quantitative study, participation is framed as inclusivity and integration in the social activities or network of social activities at the PC. Like transformational issues, the major group of students experience inclusivity, ability to influence policies in student life, involvement in transformation projects, residency culture being inclusive, experiencing non-racialism and experiencing political freedom. This section on student life also displays high levels of neutrality, ranging from 29% to 50% on some issues. As with many factors in the quantitative phase of this study, there is evidence in Chapter 5 which contradicts the perceptions of students on the level of inclusivity, participation and influence. This evidence is in the assumed differences in the level of cultural capital, economic capital and social capital.

6.4.3. Students and access, inclusion and accommodation

Information collected in the qualitative analysis indicates that, at the MC, due to geographical location, diversity in race and culture is lacking. In the VC there is a sense that some students intentionally isolate themselves from a diverse cultural or racial setup. This differs from the PC. The PC is the most diverse of the three campuses. However, cultural capital and economic capital seem to continue to regulate positions in the PC

student life and institutional culture level. For instance, Black students tended to be more neutral towards transformation at the PC than White students. Black students may have experienced to some extent that they have to be socialised and included into aspects of the Afrikaner culture, yet it must be mentioned that this lessened since the time of the survey in 2022.

6.4.4. Student experiences of transformation at the NWU

Investigating transformation of the institutional culture at the PC, there is a feeling of positivity. On matters of experiencing an open-door policy, diversity in all cultures and respect to a particular culture, the scores are all above 54%. On the matter of integration of all cultures, 44.1%, on the language policy 46.3%, on the symbolic meanings of buildings 43.7% and on transparency, 31.9% of students were positive.

In using Bourdieu, the assumption is that experiences are embedded with changes and conflicts over/with time. In contradiction to the qualitative interviews, the assumption is that student experiences over transformation are still frozen on diversity of cultures, language symbolism and the integration of culture. This contradiction alludes to the deterministic interpretation of transformation from an institutional perspective versus the subjective interpretation of transformation from an agent perspective.

6.4.5. Student experiences of teaching and learning transformation at NWU

Student experiences of teaching and learning in this study are overwhelmingly positive. This is due, perhaps, to the fact that most of the samples contained Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. (STEM) students. When this concern was raised in the interviews, the student representatives at the PC have no opinion on the matter due to the constrained mandate they have in this regard. Therefore, their focus is on managing complaints and ensuring students have all the information they need with regard to the current status quo.

6.4.6. Testing of the relationships between variables

There is no significant relationship between perceptions on transformation and gender. There is a significant difference between Black and White students on student life and institutional culture. Black students tend to be a little more neutral than White students.

The major finding on the relationship between the perceptions on transformation and their geographical and socio-economic backgrounds was that there is no difference between students from these backgrounds. The assumption is that both the government and the NWU can source funding to assist students so that their background does not really impact on their experience of transformation.

6.4.7. Theoretical comments

Institutions of higher learning have a high rate of politically inactive students. This means that in the personal, political and practical spheres of transformation processes, the political sphere determines the practical outcome and that the personal sphere is aligned with this change. Due to the larger transformational agenda of the South African government, the political sphere is dominant. This means that the personal sphere is not a driving force for transformation into higher education. This was specifically found at the PC. In the five nested levels of consciousness in the personal sphere, students had mainly an embedded consciousness. This is a passive socialisation of consciousness stemming from factors outside the control of the student. Some students do have a self-reflexive level stemming from the realisation that societal factors can limit consciousness, and those students reflect consciously about the challenges they face. Still fewer students at the PC were on the third level of awareness in which students engage with difference, resistance and work for change. Few students were on the fourth level in which students collaborate to co-create change and the fifth level in which students have a resonant consciousness in which they resonate with experiences of one another to form a common understanding.

6.5. Contributions of the study

The findings of this study contribute to the limited available research of transformation perceptions of students at the NWU in South Africa. This was accomplished by implementing a mixed-method research study to capture the perceptions of transformation by students at the NWU. Transformation as of writing should be considered as an objective for excellence. The lack of awareness and knowledge on the strategic value of transformation in either worldviews, behaviours or culture is detrimental to how the future is conceptualised. For instance, for an Afrikaans legacy at the PC to be maintained, it can only happen if all stakeholders network relationships that reproduce an

NWU culture, by encouraging said stories for all who are involved. In other words, the problem is the same and the perspectives to the solution may differ, but to only be acceptable if they serve one goal.

In summary, the contributions of the study are as follows:

- The theoretical framework demonstrated its applicability to provide an explanation of the strategic influences of the different spheres of transformation. From the personal, political and practical spheres, agency becomes part of the solution in changing the structure.
- The theoretical contributions also assisted in understanding the power dynamics or influences of an institutions ability to offer capital in Bourdieu terms to successfully provide an identity to stakeholders. This further offers a starting point, however facile, to examine identity formation and reformation in the background of the nation-state, the institution and the individuals converging at the NWU, as a field. As noted in Chapter 5, there are cultures reproduced on all three campuses which are both positively and negatively informing policy and practice.
- Additionally, this theoretical framework provided an opportunity to create a framework for extracting interpretations and not only definitions of transformation. This refers to accepting the lexicons of transformation only as a path to contextualising and interpreting transformation within the higher education context. In defining or conceptualisation of transformation, the perceptions of students are important. These perceptions are what captures the importance of the alluding differential. This study argues that behind or underneath the structural transformations, is a need for worldviews, behaviours and cultures to change.
- The mixed methodology which captured both the general knowledge of NWU students at the PC on transformation and the interpretation knowledge of the NWU student leaders on all three campuses is important. The use of this mixed method was integral to making the point that there is a differential in transformation perceptions and a need to involve students in transformation processes at the NWU.

These findings can assist the university to create a clearer and more deliberate transformational charter in view of all the stakeholders involved. As a result, students and the university can benefit greatly in creating new habits and gestures to improve social cohesion at the PC. Additionally, to create an academic culture that will improve transformation awareness and highlight the blind spots are inherently within individuals and institutions. In conclusion of this section, this study contributes a method of which the NWU can easily identify which aspects of transformation do students appreciate or struggle with.

6.6. Limitations

Every research study has its limitations, and some limitations occur during and after the literature review, analysis or concluding chapters of a research study. The first and foremost limitation of the study was the lack of research done on the perceptions of students on transformation at the NWU. As a result, framing the study became challenging in that transformation as a concept is very broad and in the context of higher education it is limited to the constitutional role of higher education institutions. Secondly, time and money as a resource became a challenge. The study makes it clear that perceptions studied are at the PC. However, the study would have been more comprehensive had the quantitative questionnaire of Chapter 4 explored all three campuses.

The limitation was time and resources to go back and forth between campuses. Additionally, it creates a limitation in the boundaries of a Masters study. Therefore, this limitation was in some way addressed through the qualitative phase of the study. In this phase, the SRC and SCC members were interviewed on the basis of the relevant themes in the literature review and the quantitative analysis. Moreover, the need to represent the NWU as an ambassador in the SCC/SRC and being a student representative with an activist mandate from the students is challenging. This is a dilemma for leaders who wish to be involved in both.

Thirdly, Covid-19, as mentioned in Chapter 3, put a pause on the study as the sample needed for its progression were unavailable on campus due to covid restrictions. During the first two years of the study, only Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 were done. During the Covid-19 lockdown students were absent from residencies and this weakened the

traditional cultures of the residencies. The study was therefore conducted after significant cultural orientations were lost. Lastly, and more in line with the leadership dilemma mentioned above are SRC/SCC members that were reluctant to participate in the research study. This limited the extent of information that could be collected to contextualise the results of the quantitative study.

6.7. Recommendations

In outlining what recommendations should be from this study, it is important to acknowledge the work done by Dr Theuns Eloff and the late Prof Dan Kgwadi in setting the NWU on a path of transformative change. It should be noted in further research that transformation in the context of the NWU cannot be limited to the practices occurring solemnly within the university as a field. As mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, institutions of higher learning should also act as polity in addressing the challenges faced by the broader society. In this study, the research has alluded to the impact of geographical location, race, culture and socio-economic status on student perceptions of transformation as experienced at the NWU.

Additionally, the positive results of the quantitative questionnaire can be observed and noted as a reflection of the work done over the past 20 years in the transformation journey of the NWU. Furthermore, this feat should not take away from the reality in that this observation is at service level as truthful about transformation at the NWU. It is the argument in this study that this facile view of transformation can be a disadvantage to transformation leadership, from an in-depth and qualitatively inclusive and progressive cultural practice of transformative change. In acknowledging the above mentioned, a transformation of acceptance (profound change in the personal and practical sphere) as opposed to a managed transformation journey of which this study observes as tolerance, is beneficial in future research.

Furthermore, the interpretation of transformation cannot be emphasised more importantly than through context. In this study, this context was interpreted through theory. In the history of the NWU, the context has been through very deep and entrenched political ideologies. This study acknowledges that, among its contributions should be an emphasis between race, culture and race-associated/oriented culture present on NWU campuses. In this milieu, equity, participation, inclusion, accommodation, etc., changes meaning

from observer to observer. From this perspective, copying and pasting the objectives of the constitution cannot be a consideration of strategy, but a given obligation. Therefore, what differentiates student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning transformation at the NWU?

The analysis in Chapter 4 displayed a significant difference in satisfaction of student life and institutional culture by race. It was also clear from the qualitative conversations that residencies are an important hub for the transformation of student life and institutional culture from a student perspective. Therefore, it is the recommendation of this study that to address transformation and the impact in transforming said differences, the following practices are important for racial and cultural groups. For instance, an inclusive curriculum design that integrates perspectives, histories and experiences. Alternatively, orientation events should summarise an in-depth but succinct programme of the objectives and benefits of integrated perspectives and cultures, histories and experiences that converge at the NWU. In doing so, microaggressions and biases are constantly confronted through the “uncomfortable conversations” as they occur. In this manner, safe spaces for cultural expression within the existing activities at the NWU are enhanced and made more visible. Additionally, to address the participation challenge addressed in Chapter 5, representative leadership across student leadership for all groups and cultures at the NWU structures is vital.

The above-mentioned recommendations refer to the intent of ensuring that the reproduction and maintenance of culture and practices at the NWU is beneficial to all students. Moreover, and admittedly even more ambitious, there need to be some cultural and social exchange programmes across campuses. This study acknowledges that campus cultures will be different, but the basic principles will remain the same. It is my personal preference to see students mandated to study a non-dominant language to them from the language policies of the NWU. I believe it would be a brand shock (window of opportunity) and a benefit that I believe could ensure WE hear each other (“60% of the meeting in Setswana”, section 5.2.1.1.1). This example among many other identifiable examples through the study is not to force or engineer acceptance but to support what this study refers to as the cultural adaptation initiative from a broader community perspective.

It is a recommendation of this study that the consideration of the political sphere in engaging transformation is important. This is to address the socio-economic challenges of students in higher education institutions. Universities already have financial aid and scholarship programmes, mental health resources and emergency funding contingencies. However, the massification of higher education and the burden of poverty, unemployment and underemployment, make this a challenge for higher education institutions. These social problems also make it difficult to bridge the gap with online hybrid courses and transportation assistance to a certain extent.

Furthermore, the observation during this study's review of literature is that transformation in higher education is focused too much on the political-strategic aspects of society through socio-political and economic processes by way of institutions associated with government and in this case that of higher learning. This tendency ignores the importance of analytical and scholarly approaches to transformation from the perspective of student's interests. For instance, the idea of diversity and inclusion audits is critical if done with the perspective of transformational leadership and not transformation management. This initiative does call for some reservations in leadership structures as the programme could be comprehensive in its initial stages. In short, transformation in student life, institutional culture and teaching and learning from a student perspective deserves its own policy framework and polity roadmap.

Furthermore, future studies (although not the focus of the study's main items) should focus on the transformative participation in student life and access to capital in higher education through institutional cultures. The outcome of such a policy can potentially go beyond the transactional managed relationship, between students as clients and the institution as a vendor of a particular service in transformation and address real-life challenges through higher education. This ambitious take is justified by the concept of becoming an alumnus to any institution. This implies an alumnus is an added resource in transformational leadership. Therefore, fulfilling the final level of consciousness at which there is a shared participation in uniting sub-cultures, experiences, sharing space and the interconnectedness of capital. This relationship therefore extends the intent of transformation within higher education institutions.

There are elements and practices that remain frozen within higher education institutions. Therefore, transformation needs consciousness and to be transparent in what it intends to accomplish. Within this study, the personal sphere, political sphere and practical sphere could be argued as integral to creating sustainable transformative futures. This study argues that a better integration of all spheres through analytical and inclusive approaches could create more desirable and beneficial transformation goals for all stakeholders in terms of who benefits from transformation.

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8. APPENDICES

Factor analysis for Transformation in Student Life

Appendix 1. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,867
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	734,353
	df	21
	Sig.	<,001

Appendix 2. Anti-image Matrices

Anti-image Matrices							
	Social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU are inclusive for all cultures.	Student life at the Potchefstroom campus is inclusive in nature.	NWU students can influence policies that influence them.	The NWU involve students in transformational projects, activities and initiatives to create a culture of equality and non-racialism.	My understanding is that the culture of the residences on the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is inclusive of all groups.	The student leadership represents my views and preferences.	Students experience political freedom at the Potchefstroom campus irrespective of their political affiliation.

Anti-image Correlation	Social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU are inclusive for all cultures.	,854 ^a	-,436	-,112	-,217	-,168	-,084	-,095
	Student life at the Potchefstroom campus is inclusive in nature.	-,436	,862 ^a	-,043	-,038	-,169	-,115	-,126
	NWU students can influence policies that influence	-,112	-,043	,886 ^a	-,258	,040	-,035	-,043
	The NWU involve students in transformational projects, activities and initiatives to create a culture of equality and non-racialism.	-,217	-,038	-,258	,862 ^a	-,261	-,177	,062

	My understanding is that the culture of the residences on the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is inclusive of all groups.	-,168	-,169	,040	-,261	,902 ^a	-,114	-,087
	The student leadership represents my views and preferences.	-,084	-,115	-,035	-,177	-,114	,866 ^a	-,390
	Students experience political freedom at the Potchefstroom campus irrespective of their political affiliation.	-,095	-,126	-,043	,062	-,087	-,390	,852 ^a

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

Appendix 3: Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained						
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,772	53,879	53,879	3,272	46,744	46,744
2	,857	12,246	66,125			
3	,698	9,975	76,100			
4	,544	7,775	83,875			
5	,443	6,325	90,200			
6	,383	5,469	95,669			

7	,303	4,331	100,000			
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.						

Appendix 4: Factor Matrix

Factor Matrix^a

	Factor 1
Social activities organised by the SRC or SCC at the NWU are inclusive for all cultures.	,808
Student life at the Potchefstroom campus is inclusive in nature.	,760
The student leadership represents my views and preferences.	,705
My understanding is that the culture of the residences on the NWU, Potchefstroom campus is inclusive of all groups.	,695
The NWU involve students in transformational projects, activities and initiatives that had been initiated to create a culture of equality and non-racialism.	,693
Students experience political freedom at the Potchefstroom campus irrespective of their political affiliation.	,605

NWU students can influence policies that influence them (e.g. policies about equality, curriculum changes, residency admission).	,462
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Appendix 5: Reliability statistics

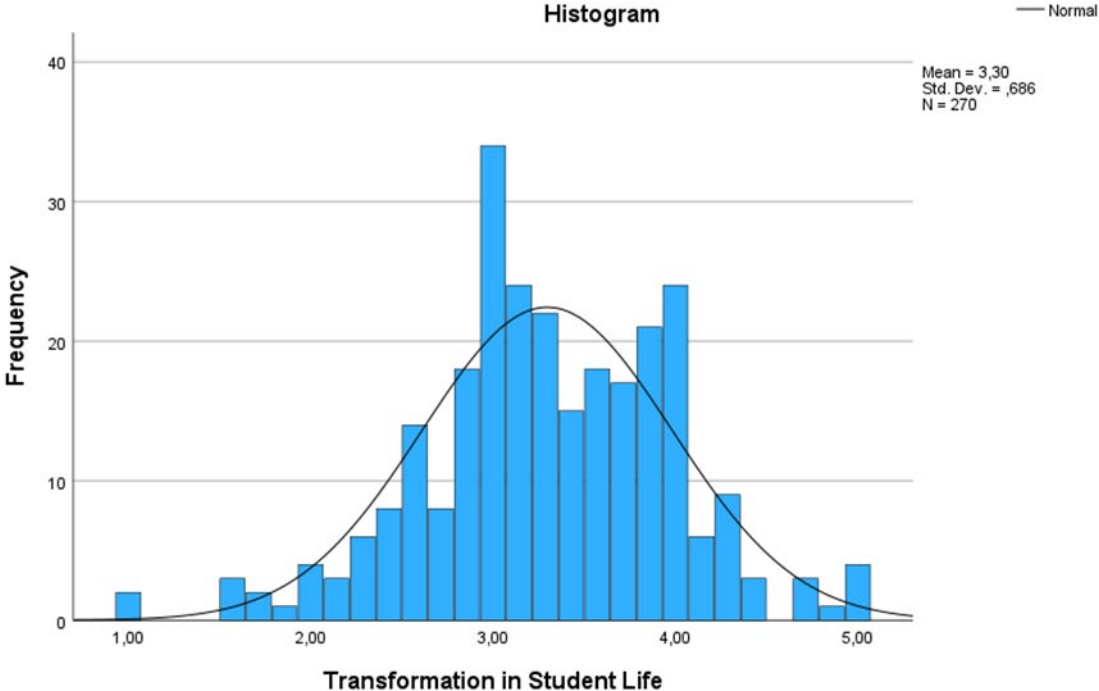
Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,854	7

Appendix 6: Test of Normality

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Transformation in Student Life	,077	270	<,001	,984	270	,004

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix 7: Histogram, Transformation in Student Life



Factor analysis for Transformation in institutional Culture

Appendix Table 8

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,812
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	515,844
	df	10
	Sig.	<,001

Appendix Table 9

Anti-image Matrices						
		I experience at the NWU an open-door policy for students.	I experience that the NWU embraces the diversity of its students'.	I experience the NWU to be respectful of my specific culture.	I have experienced the NWU identity to be integrative – all sub-cultures are recognised.	I agree with the language policy of the NWU.
Anti-image Correlation	I experience at the NWU an open-door policy for students.	,838 ^a	-,329	-,069	-,053	,003
	I experience that the NWU embraces the diversity of its students.	-,329	,826 ^a	-,202	-,296	-,086
	I experience the NWU to be respectful of my specific culture.	-,069	-,202	,790 ^a	-,507	-,162
	I have experienced the NWU identity to be integrative – all sub-cultures are recognised.	-,053	-,296	-,507	,772 ^a	-,195
	I agree with the language policy of the NWU.	,003	-,086	-,162	-,195	,902 ^a
a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)						

Appendix Table 10

Factor Matrix^a	
	Factor
	1
I have experienced the NWU identity to be integrative – all sub-cultures are recognised.	,850
I experience the NWU to be respectful of my specific culture.	,815
I experience that the NWU embraces the diversity of its students' cultures.	,768
I agree with the language policy of the NWU.	,543
I experience at the NWU an open-door policy for students.	,507
Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.	
a. 1 factors extracted. 6 iterations required.	

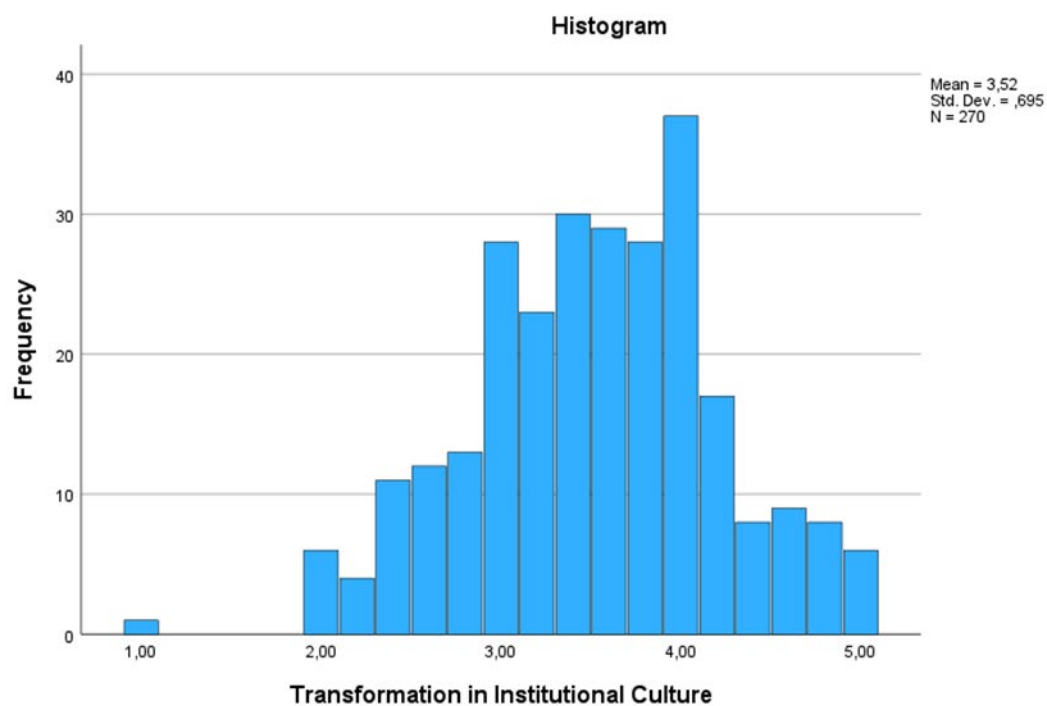
Appendix Table 11

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
814	5

Appendix Table 12

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Transformation in Institutional Culture	,075	270	<,001	,985	270	,006
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Appendix Table 13



Factor Analysis for Transformation in Teaching and Learning

Appendix Table 14

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,760
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	240,974
	df	21
	Sig.	<,001

Appendix Table 15

Anti-image Matrices								
		I think the academic programmes on the Potchefstroom campus are globally competitive.	Module content is relevant to the South African context.	The academic programme I am registered for includes content that speak to current social issues.	My classes allow debates and conversations which are inclusive of different knowledge perspectives.	I have lecturers from different cultural backgrounds.	The curriculum includes content from African centred scholars.	My experience is that lecturers will tolerate all cultural views in my classes.
Anti-image Correlation	I think the academic programmes on the Potchefstroom campus are globally competitive.	,755 ^a	-,247	-,026	-,095	-,023	-,026	-,087
	Module content is relevant to the South African context.	-,247	,746 ^a	-,135	,042	-,156	-,107	-,116
	The academic programme I am registered for includes content that speak to current social issues.	-,026	-,135	,734 ^a	-,360	-,047	-,137	-,119

My classes allow debates and conversations which are inclusive of different knowledge perspectives.	-,095	,042	-,360	,699 ^a	-,115	-,159	,018
I have lecturers from different cultural backgrounds.	-,023	-,156	-,047	-,115	,815 ^a	-,157	-,098
The curriculum includes content from African centred scholars.	-,026	-,107	-,137	-,159	-,157	,805 ^a	-,165
My experience is that lecturers will tolerate all cultural views in my classes.	-,087	-,116	-,119	,018	-,098	-,165	,807 ^a

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy(MSA)

Appendix Table 16

Total Variance Explained							
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	2,455	35,078	35,078	1,793	25,617	25,617	1,513
2	1,023	14,620	49,698	,418	5,973	31,590	1,438
3	,875	12,498	62,195				
4	,789	11,272	73,468				
5	,674	9,634	83,102				
6	,667	9,525	92,627				
7	,516	7,373	100,000				

Appendix Table 17

Factor Matrix^a		
	Factor	
	1	2
The academic programme I am registered for includes content that speak to current social issues.	,602	-,204
My classes allow debates and conversations which are inclusive of different knowledge perspectives.	,575	-,413
The curriculum includes content from African centred scholars.	,542	
Module content is relevant to the South African context.	,526	,378

I have lecturers from different cultural backgrounds.	,451	
My experience is that lecturers will tolerate all cultural views in my classes.	,430	,148
I think the academic programmes on the Potchefstroom campus are globally competitive.	,378	,192

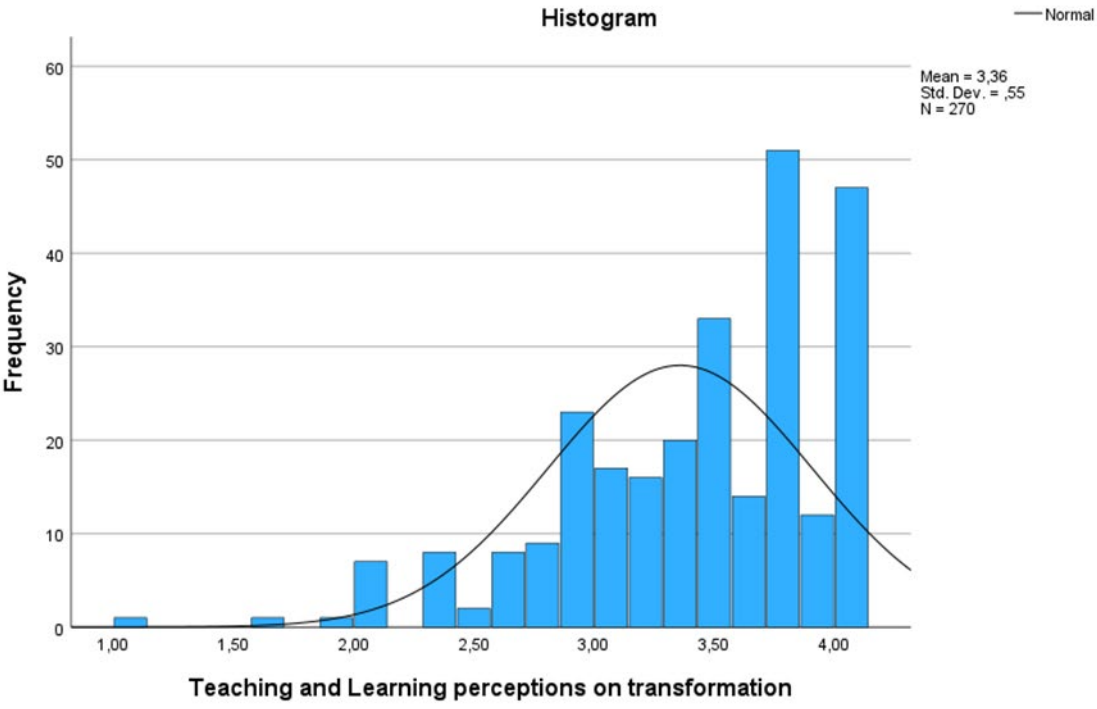
Appendix 18

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,686	,689	7

Appendix 19

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Teaching and Learning perceptions on transformation	,149	270	<,001	,912	270	<,001

Appendix 20



Appendix 21



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 016 103 4446
Email: Fezive.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za

27 January 2023

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC)** on 30/03/2022, the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby approves your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Study title: An investigation into student perceptions on higher education transformation at the North-West University, Potchefstroom campus.																															
Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof S.J. Zaaiman																															
Student/Research Team: W.X. Mcwabeni (27255255)																															
Ethics number:	<table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>9</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>7</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Institution</td><td colspan="5">Study Number</td><td colspan="2">Year</td><td colspan="5">Status</td></tr></table> <p>Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional <u>Authorisation</u>; A = <u>Authorisation</u></p>	N	W	U	-	0	0	9	6	8	-	2	2	-	A	7	Institution			Study Number					Year		Status				
N	W	U	-	0	0	9	6	8	-	2	2	-	A	7																	
Institution			Study Number					Year		Status																					
Application Type: Single Study																															
Commencement date: 04/04/2022	Risk: <table border="1"><tr><td>Low</td></tr></table>	Low																													
Low																															
Expiry date: 04/04/2023																															
Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.																															

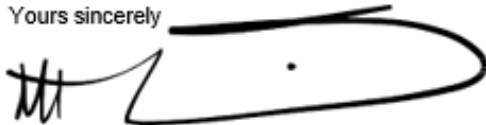
Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

<p>General conditions:</p> <p>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The study leader/supervisor (principal investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the <u>BaSSREC</u>:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and- without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) <u>during the course of the study</u>.• The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary <u>during the course of the study</u>, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the <u>BaSSREC</u>, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.• Annually a <u>number of studies</u> may be randomly selected for an external audit.

- The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and BaSSREC reserves the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the BaSSREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- BaSSREC can be contacted for further information or any report templates via BaSSREC-Admin@nwu.ac.za.

The BaSSREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the BaSSREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof E. Idemudia

Chairperson NWU Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
5 November 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

Appendix 22



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Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Data Gatekeeper Committee

NWU RDGC PERMISSION GRANTED / DENIED LETTER

Based on the documentation provided by the researcher specified below, on 31/05/2022 the North-West University (NWU) Research Data Gatekeeper Committee (NWU-RDGC) hereby **grants permission** for the specific project (as indicated below) to be conducted at the NWU:

Project title: How to obtain knowledge on Sociology and its specialised fields in order to lay the theoretical foundation at the hand of which in depth research can be undertaken.

Project leader: Prof J Zaaïman

Researcher/Project Team: -

Ethics reference no: NWU-01499-19-A7

NWU RDGC reference no: NWU-GK-22-036

Specific Conditions:

- Students should not identify qualifying students within their own network as this may not be an objective manner of recruitment.
- Student leadership from each faculty may assist the students to advertise their research invitation in the following manner:
 - Send out an invitation to prospective participants via their communication channels.
 - Make an announcement or allow the students to present their research study to prospective participants.
 - Allow students to advertise through posters within their faculty venues.

Approval date: 31/05/2022

Expiry date: 30/05/2023

General Conditions of Approval:

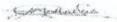
- The NWU-RDGC will not take the responsibility to recruit research participants or to gather data on behalf of the researcher. This committee can therefore not guarantee the participation of our relevant stakeholders.
- Any changes to the research protocol within the permission period (for a maximum of 1 year) must be communicated to the NWU-RDGC. Failure to do so will lead to withdrawal of the permission.

- The NWU-RDGC should be provided with a report or document in which the results of said project are disseminated.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemics the Committee would like to advise the researcher to practice the necessary caution and adhere to the National Covid-19 Guidelines when conducting research with participants.

Please note that under no circumstances will any personal information of possible research subjects be provided to the researcher by the NWU RDGC. The NWU complies with the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (PAIA) as well as the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (POPI). For an application to access such information please contact Ms Annamarië De Kock (018 285 2771) for the relevant enquiry form or more information on how the NWU complies with PAIA and POPI.

The NWU RDGC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the NWU RDGC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof Jeffrey Mphahlele
Chairperson NWU Research Data Gatekeeper Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\test 2.docm
13 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS1\8533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Applications RDGC\Updated RDGC Permission Letter.docm
15 November 2018

File reference: 1.1.4.3