Understanding skin colour: Exploring colourism and its articulation among black and coloured students

by

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ABSTRACT

While international scholars have increasingly drawn attention to colourism as a social phenomenon, South Africa has yet to understand its various expressions in the wake of a history of apartheid. Colourism can be described as "prejudicial treatment of individuals based on varying degrees of skin colour." This has significant implications for people of colour, who are often targets of racism, but also perpetrators of skin tone discrimination among their own racial group. The main objective of this study was twofold: to enquire about the existence of colourism, and to determine how it may possibly articulate itself as an everyday phenomenon among students. A sample of black and coloured students were drawn from the University of Cape Town student population. Qualitative focus group interviews were conducted to collect all necessary data. The results indicated the existence of colourism in the lives of students including their relationships with family members, friends, potential intimate partners, and in their wider societal context. A thematic analysis revealed four main themes: a) Racial identity formation; b) Skin tone valuations and their influence in the colourism hierarchy; c) Gendered articulations of colourism; and d) Trauma and its effect on the expression of colourism. Racial identity formed an important part of how students situated themselves positively or negatively in the historical and present day context of South Africa. Skin tone valuations meant that greater value was often placed on light skin as an attribute of beauty, wealth and intelligence. However, this was mediated by gender such that the value placed on light and dark skin was often determined by gender. One crucial observation was the pervasive nature of cultural trauma in and through experiences of colourism. Through a process of symbolic violence, colourism was understood as internalised racism which becomes a weapon wielded by black and coloured individuals against themselves. As such, inherited racist beliefs about the inferiority of darker skin, and superiority of lighter skin have been internalised, even among a post-apartheid generation of youth.

Key words: colourism, internalised racism, neurosis of blackness, cultural trauma

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CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The term "colourism" describes a phenomenon of prejudicial treatment of individuals based on varying degrees of skin colour (Okazawa-Rey, Robinson & Ward, 1987). This is typically demonstrated both interracially and intra-racially, by the favouring of light-skinned individuals over dark-skinned individuals. However what is particularly noteworthy, is the pervasive nature of colourism as an intra-racial phenomenon among people of colour (de Santana Pinho, 2009; Keith & Herring, 1991; Maddox & Chase, 2004). A growing body of literature empirically demonstrates that the expression of colourism privileges light-skinned people of colour over dark skin in various areas including education, income, housing and the marriage market (Hunter, 2007). In spite of the concept's relatively recent coining by Alice Walker in 1983, it is worth noting that 'colourism', as an expression, refers to a longstanding form of discrimination whose origins date as far back as the colonial era (Jones, 2000). Though these origins themselves are multifaceted, scholars suggest that white supremacy, Eurocentric beauty standards, external racism by whites, internalized racism by blacks, unyielding conceptions of femininity and masculinity as it relates to race and skin tone, are all factors which combine to manifest colourism as a phenomenon (Franklin, Boyd-Franklin & Kelly, 2006; Kelly, 2004; Walker, 1983).

Much of what is known about colourism as an intragroup phenomenon is based on research from the United States of America (USA) and, to a lesser extent, Europe, South America, and the Caribbean (Gabriel, 2007). Indeed, little is known about its nature and articulation as lived experience in the context of South Africa. One vital consideration in the reading of this literature is the manner in which historical and current racial classification of individuals in the aforementioned countries differs somewhat from that of South Africa. For the purpose of this research, it is of particular importance to articulate these classifications, and to recognise and deconstruct racial classification itself as one socially constructed tool which underscores colourism. Moreover, this needs to take into account the overarching context of white supremacy from which race[1] is derived.

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[1]In this work 'race' denotes a socio-political construction using physical characteristics to classify individuals into artificial categories (See page 3)

The interplay between white supremacy, racism and colourism

Several writers have noted that colourism can appropriately be contextualised in relation to white supremacy and racism (Gabriel, 2007; Glenn, 2008). White supremacy in this case, refers broadly to the political, economic, and cultural structures where whites exceedingly control power and material resources (Gillborn, 2006). White supremacy also means that conscious and subliminal ideas of white superiority and entitlement are endemic, and relations reinforcing white domination and non-white subservience are practiced daily in institutions and social settings (Gillborn, 2006). This can be seen through images of beauty, health and wellness which all emphasise the attractiveness of white features as a default standard (Hunter, 2011). For example, imagery of healthy hair and flawless skin is often depicted on the backdrop of a white man or woman (Glenn, 2008; Hunter, 2011), with the subconscious implication that this depiction is representative of what a typical or normal human being ought to look like. What is more sinister perhaps, is the converse implication that the black physical form is consequently not human, or at the very least, lacks profoundly in human characteristics**.**

A similar rationality can be traced back through history to strategies which have been used to justify qualitative differences between black and white people. These were instrumental in accelerating colonisation, slavery, and racially oppressive regimes such as apartheid in South Africa. One such strategic device was the highly contentious Hamitic hypothesis which spread prejudiced views about black people and their place in the world (Sanders, 1969). This theory propagated two main views about the black person: that this individual was the result of degeneration due to environmental circumstances and that as a human, this black individual was a separate creation to the white individual, that is, subhuman in character (Sanders, 1969).

These ideas were also largely championed by Hegel's 'Philosophy of History' in the 19th century, where he gave a depiction of the (Negro) as a character who lacked a higher consciousness and solely existed as a "natural man in his completely wild and untamed state" (Hegel, 2004, p. 93). This, he reported, was supported by copious accounts from missionaries who perceived the Africans as sorcerers devoid of moral faith and in need of Christianity as one of the tools to civilise them (Hegel, 2004). In addition to this, Hegel wrote that Africa (and with it, Africans) played no role in world history- with no movement or progress to demonstrate. He credited historical developments of civilisation to Asia and the European world, highlighting Egypt in particular as a mark of civilisation which "does not belong to the

African spirit" (Hegel, 2004, p. 99). In a modern context, Hegel's ideas may seem severely misguided. However, his philosophy was postured as a scientific study which was exemplary in his age. As such, this shaped much of the thinking around who and what black people were. The black individual (although useful as a commodity) was regarded as an uncivilised being who needed to be controlled and scrutinised by white superiors (Sanders, 1969). White individuals therefore, were justified in holding power and all privileges that accrued to them by virtue of their whiteness. Colonial European governments had already grown firmly supportive of this idea after Christopher Columbus' encounter with the Carib and Arawak Indians of America around 1492. The perception of people encountered outside Europe as 'sub-human' established a catalyst to either convert them to Christianity or to enslave them (Zuma, 2015). Much of this was done with the intent of appropriating the resources of other nations for Europeans, and to impose Eurocentric ways of being in the world. This again reiterated the importance and supremacy of whiteness as a social construct.

Given that white supremacy has contributed significantly to shaping a racialized world, it follows that the logical consequences of this thinking would be racism and white privilege (Gabriel, 2007). Race, although used as a category marking essential difference among individuals, is itself a socio-political construction where physical characteristics (such as skin colour and hair texture) are used to assign individuals into artificial, mutually exclusive, biologically separate, demographic classifications (Helms, Jernigan & Mascher, 2005). For centuries, race has given meaning to categories such as "black" and "white" and has often been formally embedded in socio-political structures. In the United States "black" is used to describe a racial group of people with any remanence of African ancestry (Gabriel, 2007; Gullickson, 2005). This classification was formally entrenched as the 'one drop rule' (otherwise referred to as the rule of hypodescent) in Virginia, in 1705 - a mechanism to ensure that 'races' were kept pure and separate (Gullickson, 2005). The rule came in light of the reality that racial intermixing (between blacks and whites) had been occurring prior to the entrenchment of slavery, resulting in a growing population of mixed-raced individuals commonly referred to as mulattos (Gullickson, 2005). Thus in order to essentialize the racial classification of mixed-race individuals, one was classified to the category of their racially subordinate parent by default (Gabriel, 2007). In this example, white supremacy became an instrument which sought to preserve the purity of whiteness by systematic exclusion of the racially 'tainted' from the white group.

Similarly, the South African apartheid government took to the strict classification of racial categories to aid the future division and discriminatory treatment of phenotypically distinct groups into racial groups (Heinke, 1979). This was formalised as the *Population Registration Act* (No. 30 of 1950) which retained the traditional 'black' and 'white' racial categories whilst also introducing the intermediate racial category of 'coloured' (or mixed-race) individuals (Erasmus & Ellison, 2008). Introducing the 'coloured' category provided a social distinction but also allowed the government to reinforce each racial groups' hierarchical standings in society. The *white* group was highest in terms of the privileges, class, and legislative freedoms, followed by the *coloured* group who were subject to fewer legislative restrictions than the lowest in society-*blacks.* (Glenn, 2008). Here the same logic of white supremacy, took a different course as the creation of coloured category sought to extend benefits of whiteness to individuals with traces of white ancestry**.** In both these cases white supremacist ideas extended to cultivate racism. That is, a system of oppression based on racial categories and domination, designated (whites) as superior to all other groups and these perceived differences were used to justify discrimination, exclusion and/or dominance (Gillford, 2006).

Insofar as it has been the purpose of classifications to 'objectively' describe the world in racial terms, the criteria often used has proven arbitrary and difficult to apply (Maddox & Chase, 2004). In South Africa for instance, appearance (including skin colour, hair texture and facial features), descent, and acceptance were used as criteria for classifying race (Erasmus & Ellison 2008). Although this method was meant to be indicative of empirical differences among people, the construction of an objective racial classification proved far more complex (Erasmus & Ellison 2008). In spite of their arbitrary nature however, racial categories have been used to produce seemingly objective descriptors of individual identity, whilst also laying the foundation for discrimination based on "qualitative differences" between people in different racial groups (Maddox & Gray, 2002).

The role of classification (categorising difference) is essential in the present day understanding of interracial and intra-racial relations (Nassar-McMillan, Roberts, Flowers & Garret, 2006). This is due to the fact that the exaggeration of difference between differently classified individuals allows racism and colourism to thrive. It is precisely the meanings derived from these differences that determine each individual's hierarchical standings in society by race and by complexion. Hunter's (2007) position on racial discrimination clarifies this point. She explains that racial discrimination operates on at least two levels—race and

colour (complexion). Racial discrimination which functions at the level of racial category (i.e. black, coloured, white) tends to be systemic, resulting in both material and ideological consequences (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Hunter, 2011; Wale & Foster, 2007). Here the white 'race' stands highest in the socio-political hierarchy. Colourism shifts the discrimination to the level of skin tone or colour. This means that even though all people of colour experience discrimination from racial categorisation, the intensity, frequency and outcomes of such discrimination will vary considerably by skin tone (Hunter, 2007). In this case, the hierarchical ordering of individuals mean that those with the darkest skin sit lowest in the socio-political rankings, often facing greater adversity than their lighter skinned counterparts within their own racial group. In fact, literature suggests that lighter skinned individuals have in some instances maintained higher personal income earnings, higher levels of education (Keith & Herring, 1991) less punitive relationships with law enforcement (Gabriel, 2007) and hold higher status as more attractive marriage partners (Hamilton, Goldsmith & Darity, 2009; Charles, 2011). Nevertheless, there is an emerging body of literature, particularly in the United States, which shows evidence suggesting that such disparities are on the decline (Gullickson, 2005). Although, this does not suggest that prejudice on the basis of skin colour has waned over time (Gullickson, 2005). In fact, colourism has persisted in the marriage market well into the twenty first century, which is indicative of a strong intra-group preference for lighter skinned marriage partners (Gullickson 2005; Hunter, 2007).

If the formative role of white supremacy is taken into account, it becomes clear that skin tone discrimination varies considerably on the basis of how closely one resembles a white person. Research has consistently shown that the lighter-skinned individual who is a closer approximation of whiteness is often subject to less hatred, discrimination, and better life outcomes particularly in comparison to others in their own racial group (Hunter, 2007). It is at this crucial point where colourism is articulated that the interplay between white supremacy, racism and colourism is made clear. Given that colourism is an overwhelmingly intra-group phenomenon amongst people of colour we can hypothesise that in one sense, white supremacy (and with it, racism) has found its resting place in the collective consciousness of black people. At the level of identity, colonial ideas and meanings of whiteness and blackness become assimilated into the formation of black people's own ideas of themselves-such that the racist rejection and hatred of blackness becomes natural and normal (Hook, 2004). The persistence of a strong preference for lighter-skinned marriage partners reflects the idea that to desire lightness (or characteristics of whiteness) for oneself is

natural and normal. This may progress to what Fanon and Farrington (1991) refer to as the 'neurosis of blackness' -the black dream of becoming white.

Internalisation of whiteness and the neurosis of being black

Neurosis can be characterised psychoanalytically as an emotional disorder (which manifests at the level of personality) arising from the conflict between an instinctual impulse and the need to repress it (Hook, 2004). Hence, the neurosis of blackness would be the black persons' dream of becoming white as it conflicts with one's being in a black body within a racist context, which makes the dream impossible (Fanon & Farrington, 1991; Hook 2004). This neurosis is the 'nervous condition' which black people must live in, as they yield to the yearning for the same level of humanity conferred to whites whilst they remain bound in their black bodies (Sartre as cited in Fanon & Farrington, 1991)

Several writers have hypothesised that this underlying dream to be white, the 'neurosis of blackness' is the subconscious motivation of colourism (Gabriel, 2007; Glenn, 2008; Hunter, 2007; Perry, 2006). Not only does it cultivate a yearning to be afforded the same level of humanity, but also to be seen as beautiful, acknowledged as intelligent and to possess material wealth which was only available to whites. Hunter (2011) explains that as a whole, images of beauty sell an all-inclusive lifestyle infused with racial meanings of whiteness, modernity, sophistication, power, and wealth. Inevitably, this cements pervasive colonial European ideologies that uphold the superiority of white culture and aesthetic (Mire, 2001). Therefore it would be anticipated that people of colour (as emancipated slaves in America and equal citizens in post-apartheid South Africa) continue to experience a profound lack on multiple dimensions in spite of their freedom, comparable to what W.E B. Du Bois (1989, p.10) described as "feeling (their) poverty; without a cent, without a home, without land, tools, or savings, (they)…entered into competition with rich, landed, skilled neighbours." This has been the trans-historical experience of being black thus far, given that the configuration of power, social and material condition continues to leave the black majority disenfranchised globally.

From as early as the 19th century Alexis de Tocqueville (1889) wrote about the neurosis of blackness as a learned cultural shame saying of (the Negro):

> "Having been told from the beginning that his race is naturally inferior to that of whites (the Negro) assents to that proposition and is ashamed of his own nature, in

each of his features he discovers the face of slavery, and if it were in his power, he would willingly rid himself of everything that makes him what he is" (p. 332).

With ideas of white superiority still deeply ingrained in the dominant aesthetic of contemporary culture (Hunter, 2007), the above insights remain true, to a greater or lesser extent, well into the 21st century. Colourism has continued to gain momentum over time. The most significant evidence of this are the flourishing skin bleaching markets worldwide including India, the Americas, Southeast Asia, Japan, China, Korea, and Africa (Glenn, 2008). What is particularly noteworthy is that women make up the overwhelming majority of consumers of these products. This could be a result of beauty marketing explicitly targeting women. However, it also reflects the dominance of patriarchy in employment and marriage markets where women attempt to maximise their desirability to attain better life outcomes (Hunter, 2011). Therefore light skin becomes more than a desire to be beautiful. It takes on an important function as social capital (gaining access to social networks), symbolic capital (providing esteem or status) and economic capital (increasing accessibility or a high paying job or promotion) (Hunter, 2011).

Another example are the thriving hair straightening and modification markets (weaves and extensions) particularly in Africa. Succumbing to the ideal of a European aesthetic becomes much more significant for women in this case, as they make up the majority of consumers (Hunter, 2007). Ultimately, these findings establish firmly that the intersectionality of race and gender compounds the effects of colourism more adversely for women than men (Glenn, 2008; Hunter, 2011).

In a world where it is impossible to become white, colourism in its various expressions may become a logical alternative for the black person who has internalised black inferiority and the shame of blackness. This includes various forms of body modification. The solutions which body modifications offer communicate that through consumption, it is within individual power to change oneself (Phipps, 2014). What they conceal however, is a far more menacing agenda where socio-politically constructed ills are transformed into market terms, becoming individual issues with consumption-centred solutions (Brown, 2006). So in partnership with consumerism, colourism uses the body as a vehicle to address societal issues (including racism) that have plagued people of colour for centuries. It is also a systematic attempt by black individuals to rid themselves of themselves in a manner which Tocqueville had anticipated in 1839. As a result, successfully attaining lighter skin, straighter hair and

Eurocentric features all take on a symbolic tone as small victories that defeat the shame and pain of blackness.

In sum, colourism demonstrates two key issues for people of colour. Firstly, that racist ideas derived from white supremacy have been subconsciously internalised. Secondly, that these ideas have been infused into the ideas that people of colours have of themselves such that they fuel desires, evaluations of oneself and others who resemble them. This may cause various disturbances at the level of identity, and may certainly carry traumatic impacts for those affected.

The pervasiveness of trauma in and through the colourism experience

Literature has shown that accounting for the various impacts of trauma may further enrich the psychological understanding and analysis of colourism as a phenomenon (Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe, 2009). The failure to clearly recognise the emotional, psychological, and to some degree, physical effects of racism on victims may remain a major contributing factor to the issue of racism and its effects on mental health (Carter, 2007). Colourism as an internalised form of racism therefore, may become particularly complex to explicate. Research suggests that targets of racism suffer psychological harm from the stress produced by such encounters (Carter, 2007) which can engender responses similar to those of classical trauma symptoms (Lowe, Okubo & Reilly, 2012). Consequently, it can be inferred that the effects of these responses endures even when the racism is internalised and articulated in the form of colourism.

At a rudimentary level, trauma may be taken to theoretically and practically denote a negative incapacity to "deal effectively" with a past experience (Legg, 2004). In essence, it is a wound or injury emanating from a physical or emotional shock, which can lead to neurosis (Etherington & Bolton, 2003). This does not speak to a lack in the individual's coping resources in dealing with traumatic events. Instead, it can be taken to mean that traumatic events overwhelm individuals' coping mechanisms (Hamber & Lewis, 1997) and fragment people's ordinary sense of themselves (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007). The very nature of trauma is such that it leaves the individual in a state of hopelessness, feeling helpless and fearing for their safety or survival (Ponds, 2013). This is an important consideration since it highlights a key underlying assumption that the subjective perception of the experience (as defined by the victim) is what defines the trauma (Ponds, 2013).

In its conceptualisation of trauma, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) is primarily concerned with the individual's perception of an experience as traumatic. This has become operationalized as various trauma diagnoses, chief among which, is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). This is defined as a trauma and stressor related disorder for which diagnostic criteria are:

> A. Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence, in one or more ways including: (1) directly experiencing event, or (2) witnessing it in person, as it occurred to others, (3) learning that traumatic event occurred to close family member or close friend, (4) experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s)
>
> B. Intrusion or re-experiencing of the traumatic event,
>
> C. Avoidant symptoms or ways in which one may attempt to avoid stimuli associated with the memory of the traumatic event,
>
> D. Negative alterations in mood or cognitions related to traumatic events, and
>
> E. Alterations in arousal symptoms
>
> (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013, p.271)

In order to warrant a diagnosis the DSM-5 also requires that the disturbance shows persistence of more than one month, causes clinically significant impairment in various areas of functioning, and may not be better accounted for by physiological effects of substance or another general medical condition (APA, 2013).

In analysing these diagnostic criteria more closely, it becomes evident that experiences of colourism would easily be overlooked in their role as phenomena with the potential to emotionally and psychologically wound individuals. Criterion A, which has been referred to as the gatekeeper criterion, has the most significant impact in defining what qualifies as a stressor (Levin, Kleinman & Adler, 2014). This is significant because all other criteria for the diagnosis rest on determining the existence of an event which is clearly identified as a stressor. The stipulation that stressors must be life-threatening or involve serious injury or sexual violence, rests on the assumption that PTSD will not develop without exposure to events which are "intensely stressful" or "watershed events" (critical turning points) in the individual's life (Friedman, Resick, Bryant & Brewin, 2011). This view is held in spite of several research findings which suggest that events which are not life threatening such as relationship conflicts and separation, may have a similar likelihood of causing PTSD

symptoms as events which include threats to bodily integrity (Levin et al., 2014). Colourism experiences, as events which are not life-threatening, would therefore also not be considered "intensely stressful" and would not meet the gatekeeper criterion for PTSD.

Another key consideration is that the DSM-5 maintains the primary importance of direct exposure to traumatic events (Levin et al., 2014). This can be seen from criteria A1 and A2 which refer to directly experiencing, or with witnessing (in person) the traumatic event as it occurred to others (APA, 2013). This is possibly due to the fact that directly experienced traumatic events have a greater likelihood of meeting PTSD criteria as these often predict worse symptoms (Anders, Frazier & Frankfurt, 2011). This may be difficult to identify in colourism experiences as individuals may not always be aware that they are directly experiencing or witnessing colourism happen to others.

The last of the two gateway criteria specifications are concerned with indirect exposure to traumatic events. Criterion A3's provision that the individual learns of the traumatic event happening to a close family member or close friend, again cannot account for the experiences of colourism or indeed racism. In this instance, the traumatically affected individual may not have a close personal connection to the victim of a traumatic event however, they may be closely connected in another sense such as sharing a similar skin tone, ethnicity, or a racial category grouping (as may be the case in South Africa where the apartheid past has created racial distinctions which persist to the present day). Individuals may also share commonalities in their histories or present circumstance which may be a source of closeness (Eyerman, 2004). An important example, from the South African apartheid context, is the definition of black identity offered by the *Black Consciousness Movement* that Steve Biko (1987, p.48) described as:

> "…those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially
> discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying
> themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations."

In this definition, black identity may be a source of solidarity which transcends a close friendship or family connection. This is not a "closeness" which the DSM captures or accepts as a qualifier in any PTSD criteria. Lastly, criterion A4 stipulates that repeated or extreme exposure to details of traumatic events constitutes a stressor (APA, 2013). However, the caveat to this criterion precludes exposure through electronic media, television, movies or pictures (APA, 2013). Again, this disqualifies the traumatic potential of colourism

experiences which are often portrayed in various public mediums depicting the valuation of lighter skin and perpetuating the devaluation of dark skin (Hunter, 2011). In addition, it excludes re-experiencing colourism as traumatic through various forms of historical documentation and commemoration.

Ironically, even though colourism fails to meet the gateway criteria for a traumatic stressor, much of the reported effects and experiences mirror criteria B, C, D, and E. Levin et al (2014) argue that the deliberately restrictive nature of trauma diagnostic criteria in DSM-5 seeks to preserve the integrity, and contain potentially frivolous use of the PTSD diagnosis. However, this also restricts potential understanding of any racism-based traumatic experiences. It is clear then, that if PTSD is used as a benchmark in an attempt to make sense of the traumatic effects of colourism, there remains little to account for how or why it may cause emotional and psychological wounds among people of colour. As is also the case for other mental health problems, it is imperative that PTSD symptoms be examined with attention to the interactions of racial and cultural socialization on the traumatized person's perceptions of the experience (Lowe et. al, 2012). Perhaps a more useful tactic in this regard, would be to attempt to understand the traumatic effects of colourism outside the clinical model.

Intergenerational transmission of cultural trauma

Another approach which may contribute to explaining the experiences of colourism moves beyond psychological and physical trauma towards the idea of cultural trauma. This is conceptualised by Eyerman (2001, p. 2) as "a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a group or have been directly experienced by any or all." In terms of this definition, individuals may experience trauma as a cultural process that is mediated through collective identity and collective memory (Eyerman, 2001, 2004a). Biko's (1987) definition of *black* serves as an illustration of collective identity, where individuals are defined as black insofar as they share a common history of discrimination and oppression. He elaborates that *blackness* is a reflection of a mental attitude and not pigmentation of one's skin (Biko, 1987). In other words, collectively remembering apartheid and its effects (that persist today) on collective identity and life experiences is what defines individuals as black. Eyerman (2004) sees this process of collective memory which arises from a common heritage and shared historical experiences as

a central element. To this Caruth (as cited in Eyerman, 2001) adds that the trauma itself becomes a reflective process which connects the past to the present through representations and imagination. This means that the first-hand experience of colonisation and apartheid need not produce a traumatic effect in themselves, but rather the memory (collective and individual) of these experiences is sufficient in doing so (Caruth as cited in Eyerman, 2001).

The traumatic effects of past events which occur through shared mental representations of loss (of self), humiliation and helplessness may also give rise to a transmission of trauma from generation to generation (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007). For Jansen (2009, p.86) this means that a (post-apartheid) generation of youngsters may articulate an indirect knowledge of the past through their attitudes and behaviours, as the "transmission from the first generation…can keep the knowledge of the past, present, and future firmly intact." The past here, embodies a world which gave black people what W.E.B. DuBois (1989, p. 3) described as "no true self-consciousness", only letting them perceive themselves through a revelation of the other world. This other world, is where white supremacy reigns supreme.

If we accept the foregoing proposition, then one could argue that colourism is the mark of a multi-generational transmission of trauma which had its genesis as white supremacy and anti-black racism. Through intergenerational transmission, colourism transforms into the conscious and unconscious practices of light-skin bias that we witness today. It is possible therefore, that mental representations of colonialism and apartheid, and their residual effects may still constitute an ongoing traumatic reality for many black people to cope with. This can lead to a distorted formation of identity (Eyerman, 2004). These residual effects can include loss of meaningful racial identity, biased privilege favouring whites, and systematic devaluation of black peoples' sense of self. It is in part, what Du Bois (1989) referred to as having a double-consciousness or sense of seeing oneself through others' eyes. That is, black people in South Africa may not only subjectively experience their own blackness, but they may also see themselves through the eyes of colonial masters and apartheid architects as the "wretched of the earth" (Fanon & Farrington, 1991).

It is arguable that colourism reflects in some way, an internalisation of the collective remembrance of what it was (and still is) to be black. In addition to valorising representations of whiteness (such that lighter skin is ascribed higher value than darker skin) the collective remembrance of colonial and apartheid ideology functions to continually 'shatter' black

people's ordinary sense of themselves, finding deficiencies in their humanity, thereby enacting a process of cultural trauma.

In his works in social psychology, Leon Festinger (1957) described this in another way using the notion of cognitive dissonance. This idea works on the basis that when one holds core belief that is very strong and new evidence opposing this belief is presented, it causes extreme discomfort and the new evidence cannot be accepted (Festinger, 1957). Instead, the imperative to protect the core belief will result in rationalization, ignoring, and denial of anything which cannot be reconciled with the core belief (Festinger, 1957). In the context of this research the core beliefs would be that black people are of lower human value, are less attractive, less intelligent, less deserving of rights and privileges than whites. This is particularly true in the context of South Africa, where the histories of colonialism, apartheid and segregation have left may black people in surroundings of abject poverty in stark contrast to the white minority. By design, segregation assigned life conditions which instilled a sense of inferiority among black communities (Zuma, 2010). These are still prominent in many townships and informal settlements today. These conditions include crime, high levels of disease and mortality, inadequate housing, and disordered family life (Clark, as cited in Zuma, 2010). Additionally it meant that black communities suffered abuse, humiliation, identity displacement and trauma (Zuma, 2010). When understood in the context of expressing trauma then, Festinger's (1957) account may explain how embracing colourism may be black peoples' way of making sense of a paradoxical world which alienates and discriminates against their physical form.

Rationale

At the outset, the need for the exploration of colourism in South Africa was highlighted by the lack of existing literature on the topic. This was indicative of a greater need for enquiry in this area. The necessity for such an enquiry formed one of the main aims, and a significant contribution of this research.

The researcher aimed to investigate the presence of colourism among a black and coloured student population, which would provide justification for the legitimacy of a greater focus in this area of study. Coupled with exploring the presence of colourism, this research aimed to provide a much needed view on how the Western-dominated ideologies of "white is right" operate tacitly within the previously most oppressed populations in the country.

Conceptual Framework

A review of research literature on colourism provides valuable insights regarding the essence of this phenomenon. The prevailing conceptualisation of colourism positions it as intragroup prejudice, based on varying degrees of skin tone, derived from internalised racism (Gabriel, 2007; Walker, 1983). This simplified summation captures several key aspects of colourism. Firstly, that it operates as a hierarchical construct describing intragroup relations, with lighter skinned individuals maintaining privilege over their darker-skinned counterparts (Phoenix, 2014). Much of the indicators of colourism which have been mentioned in the literature can be understood as a function of the inherent prejudice that lies at the heart of colourist ideology. This includes beliefs or perceptions about attractiveness (Maddox & Gray, 2002), preference for lighter skin tone (Maddox & Chase, 2004), body modification, and intimate partner selection (Glenn, 2008). These and other manifestations, reflect a distinctly colourist worldview. Nevertheless, it would be entirely reductive to assume that an inherent prejudice is a sufficient explanation of colourism. Secondly, it raises the pertinent question of how the process of ascribing distinct meanings to different skin tones occurs. Specifically, how lighter skin becomes valued as superior to darker skin. This research took on an exploratory angle in uncovering the process by which individuals make meaning of racial identities via attempting to understand the meanings which are ascribed to the skin.

The unique racial history of South Africa has bequeathed upon many, circumstances which cannot be set aside in an exploration of colourism. Any theoretical conception shedding light on the matter has to consider the effects of a past which exacted trauma, institutionalised racism and violence on the country's population- particularly black and coloured groups.

Racism is known to play a significant role in influencing colourism ideology (Glenn, 2008; Hill, 2002). In fact, the internalisation of racist ideology has been charged with perpetuating discriminatory associations with light and dark skin among African-Americans, Asians, and mulattos in Brazil and the Caribbean (Gabriel, 2007).

In South Africa, race was utilised as a tool to justify prejudice during apartheid (Erasmus & Ellison, 2008). Racial identity operationalised in the form of the Population Registration Act, was also used to simplify the process of assigning differential privileges and restrictions to different racial groups (Erasmus & Ellison, 2008). Determination of race therefore, meant the determination of entitlement. In effect, the process operationalised human value with whites having the highest value and greatest privilege, black individuals having the lowest, and coloureds in an intermediate category subject to fewer restrictions and having some privileges (Glenn, 2008). Thus, skin colour became a form of symbolic capital which reflected the worth of the individual inhabiting that skin. While the legislations of racial privilege and restrictions were dismantled with the introduction of democracy, racial categories and their hierarchical construction of skin and human value was not. The researcher's exploration into the essence of colourism in the context of South Africa had to give great consideration to how these operationalised values of human worth may influence colourism ideology. Moreover, the study sought to understand how values assigned on the basis of skin colour persist within the black and coloured student population to reproduce the perception of skin colour as capital.

In terms of the influence of violence on colourism, Pierre Bourdieu's (1991) work on symbolic violence provides a valuable framework within which the South African context can be situated. Along with administering physical violence, apartheid structures sanctioned symbolic violence on the black and coloured population. The symbolic assault on darker skin (or darker humans) is evidenced by the extreme restrictions of the rights of black populations during apartheid, and the resistance to assign them rights equalling that of the white population. An example of this is the *Bantu Education Act* (No 47 of 1953). This was specifically targeted at restricting the educational curriculum of black people so that they would be solely equipped for servitude in the homelands, and labour under whites (Union of South Africa, 1953). Symbolic violence also represents more than a form of violence operating symbolically (Lawler, 2011; Phoenix, 2014). It also denotes "violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.167). Colourism requires, to some extent, that individuals comply in their own

discrimination by accepting a prescribed set of beliefs that value lighter skin above darker skin. Indeed, the marriage between internalised racist apartheid ideology and tacit compliance of intragroup skin tone discrimination are conditions which demonstrate that colourism in South Africa may be conceptualised as a form of symbolic violence. Through symbolic violence, previously dominated people of colour now become complicit perpetrators of violence against the black body by trapping it into a racist symbolic meaning of inferiority. The symbolic violence of apartheid becomes a 'weapon' that is wielded against oneself. Black and coloured people reproduce among themselves, a hierarchical social order which reflects the racist apartheid valuation of humans on the basis of skin tone.

The researcher sought to clearly articulate the nature of colourism as a phenomenon among the black and coloured student population. The psychological mechanisms at play including: trauma inherited from a violent past, internalisation of racist ideology and symbolic violence, all function as building blocks in understanding the precursors influencing the development of colourism among the black and coloured population in South Africa. In parts of the world where manifestations of colourism are well documented, literature suggests that the intersectionality of race, class, and gender can be implicated in constructions of identity, beauty, self-perception and perception of others (Thomas, Hacker & Hoxha, 2011). As such, it was anticipated that research in the South African context could demonstrate patterns similar to these findings.

A great deal of exploration was required into understanding and describing the very essence of colourism in South Africa. Therefore, framing a conceptualisation through a single theoretical lens had the potential to stifle the dynamic interplay between exploration and conceptualisation. Although the conceptual outline described here informed the study approach, findings from this research may further enrich conceptual structures that become the basis for future research.

CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY

Research Question

In examining the nature of colourism in the South African context, it was important to first enquire about the presence of this phenomenon in the black and coloured student population. The questions for this study sought to investigate both the presence of colourism, and its possible articulations and/or representations. The research questions for this study were:

Does colourism exist as a phenomenon among black and coloured students at the University of Cape Town (UCT)?

If so, in what ways does it articulate itself as an everyday and possibly taken for granted phenomenon? (Or how does it manifest?)

Theory Questions

The theory questions for this research intended to firmly ground the research questions in the broader context by linking them to factors which are known to have theoretical implications for colourism. These include race, class and gender. The theory questions for this study were:

   i.   What, if any, is the significance of racial identity among black and coloured students?
  ii.   Do students identify with the racial categories which they have inherited from apartheid racial classification?
 iii.   How does racial identity impact on colourism?
  iv.   In what ways does class affect the manifestations of colourism?
   v.   Does gender play a role in the experience of colourism? That is, do men and women experience colourism differently? If so, what are some of the gendered experiences of colourism?

Study Design

This study sought to understand the individual and collective experiences of black and coloured students in relation to colourism as a social and psychological phenomenon. Research of this nature takes into account, how participants make meaning of their world and embraces the subjectivity of their experiences (Wilson & MacLean, 2011). In order to

achieve this, a qualitative design using focused groups was used. Qualitative designs are ideal for interpretation of experience and unmasking the meanings which are attached to that experience (Wilson & MacLean, 2011), as opposed to quantitative studies which are typically concerned with objective measurement and numerical or statistical results (Anderson, 2006). Hence a qualitative research design was more appropriate for exploration and developing a perspective on the manifestations of colourism, than quantitative measures. This research on colourism took on an approach similar to Cunningham's (1997) on racial identity formation in light-skin blacks and Lowe et al (2012) on racism trauma and coping, since these served as good examples of how qualitative research can bring depth to phenomena that are not particularly well understood. For instance, Cunningham (1997) focused on light skinned blacks as a group often marginalised from their own community in addition to experiencing prejudice from a dominant culture. On the other hand, Lowe et al (2012) bridged a literature gap by focusing on the experiences of Asian Americans as one of the fastest growing minority groups whose exposure to racism remains significantly side-lined. Both these studies used qualitative inquiry to explore the under researched experiences of marginalised individuals. Hence, they were able to bring a much needed perspective to unique social phenomena.

A preliminary focus group interview schedule was drawn up by the researcher. This had to take into account how literature has informed the topic of colourism globally and in the context of South Africa. The effectiveness of the schedule was tested on a pilot focus group. This was important in order to provide helpful insights that would increase the likelihood of success in the main study (as emphasised by Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002). The researcher used data gathered from the pilot group to review the questions along with the research aims in consideration for the final interview schedule (Appendix C). Hayes (2000) recommends that this is done in order to ensure that the schedule aids in answering the research question.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited using advertisements on the UCT's Vula psychology department website (see appendix A). It was understood that students who responded via this method of recruitment would be doing so as part of the psychology department's Student Research Participation Programme (SRPP) as per the requirements of their respective courses. As such, students who opted to participate under the SRPP were rewarded with 3 participation points each. At a later stage, posters were also placed at various locations on campus to advertise to

students from departments outside psychology (this is further explained under the sampling section). These were also placed on various notice boards at Obz square (the largest residence at UCT) with the permission of the residence facilities officer as required. The advertisements gave a brief contextualisation of the study and outlined the criteria for inclusion (see Appendix B). A sample of students were selected to participate on condition that they met the specified inclusion criteria.

Sampling

A purposive non-probability sample of 25 students signed up and met the criteria for participation in the study. This was comprised of psychology undergraduate students. However, due to several participants withdrawing during the course of the research, the sampling frame was modified to include students from other faculties and departments (after which, an additional 9 students volunteered to participate). The sample is considered purposive given that the participants were not drawn randomly, but selected on the basis of known characteristics (Ritchie, Lewis, Mc Naughton Nicholls & Ormston, 2013). Since the study explored colourism among the black and coloured student population, the main criteria required that participants belong to either of these racial groups. According to Ritchie et al (2013) the specific criteria for sampling are important since in the most effective purposive samples, the specified characteristics are typically known to relate to factors such as experience, roles, and behaviour. In this research for instance, selected participants were grouped as males and females because gender is known (based on literature) to reflect particular social roles and disparate experiences of colourism. This does not imply that every gender specific experience will be the same. It does however, mean that certain lived experiences may have particular subjective representations which may be influenced by virtue of the fact that one is male or female.

Participants

Of the 36 participants who were eligible for the study, a total of 19 either withdrew or were not present at the interview. The 17 remaining participants were divided into four focus groups of varying sizes. Although the previously desired size of 5 to 8 per group was determined according to suggested guidelines on ideal characteristics for focus groups (Morgan, 2013) in practice, group size was determined by the availability of individuals and their physical presence at the specified time and date of the group interview. Ultimately the

participants were divided into groups as follows: 3 black females, 3 coloured females, 1 coloured female individual interview, and 4 black females. One heterogeneous group was comprised of 3 black females and 3 black males.

The motivation for divisions along these lines were twofold. Homogeneity and disclosure. The principle of homogeneity emphasises the similarities of a particular group (Fern, 2001; Morgan, 2013), and was used in this research to understand each group in greater depth and to encourage greater disclosure. Fern (2001) argued that the intimate relationship between homogeneity and disclosure was supported by the notion that the closer (more similar) individuals are socially, the greater the likelihood of the experiences they will have in common. Hence the male and female separation of the groups was done with the hope that it may facilitate a symbolic representation of shared gendered experiences of colourism. Furthermore, since colourism was understood as a gender-mediated phenomenon from the literature, the researcher hoped that gender homogeneity in groups would allow for greater disclosure regarding gendered experiences, which might otherwise be difficult to disclose in a heterogeneous group. The same rationale of disclosure was used in the racial homogenisation of the groups into black and coloured students.

The heterogeneous group was added in order to provide a valuable comparison, as it introduced a dynamic which could improve diversity of perspectives and unique thoughts not expressed in the homogenous groups (Ritchie et al., 2013). This refers specifically to the added potential of highlighting how experiences could be co-constructed across gender boundaries. Nevertheless, an acute awareness of the underlying factors which would potentially affect the candour of interactions and quality of the data was considered by the researcher. Existing and perceived power dynamics between men and women in particular, had to be considered with respect to how it affected interaction within the group.

Setting

The study was conducted at UCT in Cape Town, South Africa. The university was originally founded as a white high school for boys (UCT, 2015). However, it is now composed of a relatively diverse student body (in terms of race, age, socio-economic status). In spite of this, the university still largely reflects the white middle-class culture on which it was originally founded. Most of the changes in the racial and social profile of the university took place after the early 1990s when apartheid was dismantled in South Africa. Since then, attempts

continue to be forged to make the university more representative of its diverse student population (UCT, 2015). As this is also the socio-cultural context of the participants, the study needed to take into account how such a context may inform the experiences of colourism, or influence its manifestations, particularly in light of the current student activism on campus[2] calling for decolonisation of the institution, and acceleration of transformative processes. The politically charged nature of this environment could not be taken for granted as it may have influenced the experiences and narratives that students brought to the focus groups.

Data Collection

Data was collected using a semi-structured question format in focus groups. These allowed the participants to discuss specific aspects of colourism, but because they were semi-structured, they contribute to what Babbie (2004) describes as the flexibility to introduce additional information on the topic. Focus groups are ideal for studying phenomena about which little is known (such as colourism). This is because they offer the opportunity to observe interactions between individuals such as consensus, disagreement, formulation and evolution of ideas (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Other notable advantages of focus groups are:

- This method also contributes significantly to the construction of meaning, since it provides the researcher with insights into how individuals justify their views, persuade others and jointly construct meaning (Wilson & MacLean, 2011).

- The naturalistic style of focus groups discussions closely resembles that of natural conversation which means that it is a more organic way of collecting information than in-depth interviews (Wilson & MacLean, 2011).

- In terms of flexibility, focus groups can be conducted in various settings, and the group composition can be modified to enhance certain aspects of the study focus (Ritchie et al., 2013. An example of how this flexibility worked in this research, is the

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[2] Rhodes Must Fall is an example of one such movement which called for the removal of imagery and practices which affirm colonisation at UCT. This ultimately resulted in the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue from the UCT upper campus, and sparked further activism around complete transformation of the university.

all-male and all-female composition when exploring how a preference for lighter skin is mediated by gender.

The focus groups were conducted at UCT's main library, in the group study rooms and at the Obz Square residence conference rooms. The anticipated time for discussions was 90 minutes. This extended time was given in order to ensure that discussion points had been explored in sufficient detail, and that all individuals had the chance to voice their opinions. Most of the focus groups had reached completion before the end of 90 minutes. However, in one instance, reasonable allowance was made for the discussion to continue past the allotted time given the willingness of the participants to continue.

The researcher started by introducing herself to the group and outlined the purpose of the study. Participants were then be given an informed consent form to sign (Appendix D) before the group discussion began. Once the discussion commenced, participants were asked a series of questions relating to the research topic. The interviews were recorded on a digital recording device, and notes highlighting participant interactions, reactions, and observations were made during each interview. At the end of the focus group discussion, there was time provided to address any questions relating to the study.

Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was used to analyse the data obtained. This method involved identifying, analysis and reporting of themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A great advantage of this method lies in its ability to describe the data in great detail, interpreting diverse aspects of the research topic (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Themes are a key aspect of a thematic analysis. For this study "themes" were conceptualised as representations of a patterned response or meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This refers to both implicit and explicit ideas in the data. Given the descriptive nature of this study, the focus was on which themes appeared prominently and why. The researcher followed the steps outlined by Braun & Clarke (2006) in the thematic analysis process which included the following:

1) The researcher began by familiarising herself with the data. She listened to the focus group recordings several times, read and re-read the transcripts, and began making note of potential themes emerging from the data.

2) Initial codes were generated in order to make a representation of identified themes.

3) The researcher then searched for overarching themes in the collated codes. This allowed for the data to be organised within the identified themes.

4) The main themes were reviewed in order to determine if any changes should be made (such as what themes could collapse into each other to form one theme).

5) The researcher then defined the essence of each theme and named them.

6) The gathered information was then analysed and interpreted according to the themes. The researcher compiled this information to produce the final report.

Power & Reflexivity

Since this research is qualitative in nature, it is concerned with power dynamics. Qualitative research considers how power is challenged and reproduced in the research process (Parker, 2005). For instance, a researcher inherently holds a powerful position because they are generally considered authoritative and knowledgeable. In this research, the researcher was also perceived as privileged due to her lighter skin tone, particularly as a woman. This was highlighted on several occasions by (male and female) participants who not only classified her as "yellow bone" but also described how this often amounts to social advantages as men consider it a valuable attribute in women. Rumbi's statement "if they…see you maybe they won't see us" expressed a sentiment voiced by several dark-skinned women during the interviews of how they often felt invisible in the presence of women who look like the researcher.

Though the researcher's gender enabled her to relate to particular experiences among women, skin tone presented a perceived difference which rendered her the "other" and could not be overcome. Description of lighter-skinned women as "girls like you" suggests the interaction may also have been underpinned by the researcher's presence as a light skinned black woman, which holds a symbolic representation of privilege that participants are not otherwise

able to confront on a regular basis. It is possible that this reproduction of unequal power may have caused discomfort and hindered participant transparency.

In discussions with men, the researcher was sometimes able to overcome gender differences as her skin tone placed her in a more powerful position which enabled more candid interactions. It appeared that men felt a lower compulsion to be "politically correct" in the researcher's presence as most sensitive disclosures were not directed at light-skinned women.

The researcher also held power in terms of analysing the research data, and writing the report. Since she extracted the themes and determined what data should be included in the final report, it was her judgement that largely contributed to the shaping of colourism knowledge based on the interviews.

Reflexivity is concerned with the researcher acknowledging her role in the research, taking into account her subjectivity and limitations in remaining objective or neutral (Willig, 2001). Though the researcher's did not aim to interfere, she remained acutely aware of the impact of her presence on the research process. For instance, the researchers' pre-existing positive and negative experiences of colourism stemming from her physical appearance as a light skinned black woman, meant that she held a biased view on the "privileges" associated with lighter skin. This may have influenced her stance on the articulations of colourism, and the questions which she asked about it. Participants may have become aware of this which might also have contributed what they felt able to discuss during the interviews.

Age may have also played a role as the researcher (also a UCT student) was relatively close in age to the participants. As a positive factor it may have enabled her to relate to the participants in a less formal manner. This may have facilitated greater disclosure particularly if participants felt comfortable engaging with a peer. However, her age may have had a potentially negative effect, if participant's felt that being interviewed by a peer undermined the significance of the research.

The researcher's race may have also played a role in terms of implying cultural similarity or difference with participants. As a barrier with coloured participants, race meant that cultural nuances in linguistic terms such as "sturvy, gam" or "banana" were not understood fully by the researcher. Nonetheless, she noted that this also allowed the participants to share as authorities of an owned experience or context, which she did not necessarily have access to. Where perceived similarities allowed black participants to share with some degree of comfort, it is also likely that participants withheld information, assuming a shared contextual

understanding with the researcher. Often this was marked by statements such as "You know what it's like" or "We've all been there" where participants left gaps in their narratives.

Overall the researcher's presence, as a function of her age, gender, race, skin-tone and her position as a researcher, may have had far reaching implications which influenced several aspects of this research.

Ethical considerations

All participants who took part in this study were given informed consent information sheets outlining the purpose and nature of the study (see Appendix B). They were informed of their right to withdraw from participation in the study at any point. The researcher made every effort to ensure that all information gathered in the study was kept confidential. Only the researcher and her supervisor had access to the collected data. Participants were informed that confidentiality of the study would also be contingent upon all members of the group maintaining confidentiality hence, complete confidentiality could be guaranteed. Any excerpts from the focus group discussions used in the written report are quoted with pseudonyms to preserve the anonymity of the participants. This information was conveyed to the participants prior to the focus group discussions. Lastly, the ethical standards as specified by the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology in the University of Cape Town were adhered to for every aspect of this research.

CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

As this study is exploratory in nature, the primary aim was to determine the existence of colourism among the participants thereafter to determine, based on their personal accounts, how it articulates itself. What is important to highlight at this stage, is the role that language plays as a starting point in the engagement between the researcher and participants. Language in this study is understood in the sense which Stuart Hall (1997) describes, as a tool which helps to form a particular representation of meaning. This is important because the narratives given by the participant's offer at best, a representation of their subjective worlds. Hall (1997) proposes that meaning is sustained in the dialogue between two or more speakers, and therefore not an entity which belongs to any one speaker. In this case, it is how the participants express their subjective experiences along with what the researcher derives from what they say, which produces the meaning. Therefore, the dialogue can be understood as a process of researcher and participants co-constructing meaning. It is with this understanding (and not from a view to make empirical deductions) that the researcher also attempts to interpret the data from the dialogue with the participants, and offer some analysis of how this answers the research questions.

The four focus group interviews yielded data that touched on multiple aspects of colourism as a phenomenon. The most significant themes from the findings which will be discussed in greater detail included:

a) Racial identity formation
b) Skin tone valuations and the colourism hierarchy
c) Gendered articulations of colourism
d) Trauma and the progression of colourism

Racial Identity Formation

One of the central questions in the exploration of colourism is that of racial identity formation. Helms & Richardson (1994) conceptualise racial identity as a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group. This is similar to Biko's characterisation of *black* although he chooses the specifier of a shared history of oppression as the common heritage. Since the experience of colourism may be contextualised within the larger framework of white supremacy and racism, it was important to examine how this framework has coloured both interracial and intra-racial perceptions of race.

Participants were asked about the meanings which they make of their racial identity, specifically what it meant to them to be black or to be coloured. The following interview excerpts from the different groups give a depiction of how participants conceptualised their racial identity.

Black male group

Slindile: Okay so what does it mean for you to be black?

Tumi: Just being a black person means… what's constantly going on about previously disadvantaged. So…the word black just…puts some sort of inferior…

Siya: Inferiority complex.

Tumi: Yes.

Khwezi: Yeah, yeah definitely.

Siya: And then for me…there's a whole lot…that goes with being black. So, besides the whole previously disadvantaged then…the pain that black people have gone through in terms of history. I also realized that…there is really no written history that is commercial that I'm going to learn about unless I take it into my own stride to take active steps to learn about this history. It means…I have a difficult time identifying myself in other social groups that aren't black. So I need to almost…adjust in some sort of way, or compromise, if I'm in a group of white or Indian people which they don't do when they're around black people…it means that going forward in my career, I'm probably going to need to work twice as hard or I'm going to need to do something extraordinary or special or beyond what is necessary… But it also means…that I've got a…lot of recent history to be proud of. So, you know, the end of Apartheid…the American Civil…Rights movement. It means…

Tumi: Obama.

Siya: Obama being the black, first black… There's a lot of firsts as well that I can do as a black person in future, so that's an exciting prospect. Obviously there'll be things linked to that, but then…it's not an easy time.

Tumi: Well for me…I think being black means that you…constantly have to live to seek for approval. And the approval, you never get it at any stage even…constantly you have to show that you can be civilized. You need to show that you find jokes on wordplay funny even when they're not funny. You're actually taught what is funny and what's not, you see? [laughter]…So it's bad…that's the problem that I had.

John: For me… I feel like I detach…I think the concept of…blackness… carries a lot of baggage that I don't identify with. I think I'd identify with African more than, than black. Ja, I detach those two…

Black female group

Slindile: And what does it mean to you, what does it mean to be black?

Gabi: That's such a deep question. What does it mean to be black? I relate that with being African, to be honest. I mean not to say that white people, coloured people are not African as well but for me when I think of black, I just think of being African. I just think of the tribes and the culture, and I just think of where we came from as a race and that heritage and that richness. So I think black, that's for me…what it comes down to.

Ruby: I think…the same because [laughter], the moment you say black, I think about Africans, um, regardless of the colour. Whether you are light skin, what the women say in Africa, it's like you are black [laughter].

Slindile: So then do you consider your skin colour as part of your identity?

Gabi: Well for sure, I think it does make me, it does make me who I am, yes it's true. And I think, gosh. [laughter] 'Cause for me I feel, like, the reason how, for me to get to…the way that I am in terms of…my skin and…my race and everything is part of what makes me the person that I am. For sure, definitely because I feel like we have certain experiences that are only linked to our race.

Nonto: Um ja, I suppose it is a part of my identity, definitely. Well I have never seen it as like that, it's just only when I am growing older I suppose that I am starting to, sort of, be more proud of it I suppose, and see it as a part of being African. And it's not something that I…prided myself in when I was younger…I just, I wanted nothing to do with this [gesturing to the skin over her hands] honestly [laughter]

Gabi: True.

Coloured female group

Slindile: So what does it, um, what does it mean to you then to be a coloured person? Do you actually identify with the category of coloured?

Jessica: I don't know. I think…I don't, personally I don't know what it really actually means to be a coloured person, like, beside, oh, I know that movie[3]…besides the stereotypical…image of what it means to be coloured, so…Cape Town accent, accent to them is a big thing…hair…food…I don't know, ja.

Anke: Clothing as well, like brand names and very tight fitting clothes, I guess in my, in my perception.

Emily: For me it's more…what my parents…went through, you'll find in all of that, so that's my association. But I'll only associate myself as being coloured if I need to, if that makes sense, 'cause otherwise I am just African, like we all African.

Anke: Ja.

Jessica: Ja.

Emily: But if I need to, then I am coloured. [laughter]

Jessica: Ja.

Slindile: Okay. And when would you need to?

Emily: Like, if someone, 'cause everyone…asks you what race you are, so then I say I am coloured.

Slindile: Okay….So I suppose that links with my next question—do you consider your skin colour to be part of your identity?

Emily: By [laughter] okay, by default… I don't like to categorise myself…But we, kind of…fit the whole box of…maybe the type of food that we eat or…the way we speak, where we live, those kind of things.

Anke: Ja.

Emily: Ja.

Jessica: I think that…my friends always call me… a white coloured, I guess, you know? I didn't have the accent, I didn't…grow up in…I grew up in the suburbs… I used to be offended…at school…the coloureds, the real coloureds, used to…give me

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[3] The participant later clarified that this was in reference to the film "Four Corners"

shit because I didn't have my hair as straight as theirs…stuff like that. Which it used to bother me but then…we all grew out of that.

Anke: …I also went through something similar like that in terms of the, the church that I used to go [cough] to…I don't feel like I belong there 'cause I, it's not like everyone was the stereotypical coloured but 'cause of the accent people would call me a banana.

Jessica: Ja, oh shit. [laughter]

Slindile: A banana…Can you explain to me what that means?

Anke: 'Cause I'm…coloured on the outside and white on the inside.

Individual (coloured female)

Slindile: So…can you tell me what, what it means to you, to be called coloured?

Trish: Um, to be called coloured means… you're not white, you're not black, you're sort of in between…it's always difficult, especially when talking about culture, because I don't feel like coloured people really have a culture. But I am very proud of being coloured, and I think that's where my frustration came in, when people used to…get confused with…black or coloured, and I'm like, why can't everybody be proud of who they are?

Slindile: Okay. So do you kind of, is it correct to say that you kind of feel that being coloured is this invisible in-between?

Trish: Definitely, oh my gosh! Especially in South Africa! We're like, overlooked, because when people always have discussions about race, you always hear black versus white.

Slindile: Mm.

Trish: Coloured people are…invisible, we're nowhere. Yeah. And we kind of have, like, benefits and disadvantages, because…back in apartheid times, they would prefer coloured people for work, and now… We kind of are part of the disadvantaged group, but I don't think we get a lot of… Oh, I don't think it's equal between…all people of colour, like between Indians and black people and coloured people, yes?

Slindile: Okay. So then when you think of, uh, the term coloured, do you consider that as part of your personal identity?

Trish: Mm, definitely.

Slindile: Okay. How so? How do you feel like it's part of your identity, or how does it shape your identity?

Trish: Um, I think it's…part of the whole of not fitting into a specific category. You know, like people have this general thing of not wanting to fit in… Sometimes I like being…in the middle, and then other times, it's like…what about our opinion? But yeah, in terms of who I am…I think there's a lot of …values and things that coloured people have, that I'd say that I value…

Black male and female group

Slindile: So, um, let's just talk about being black for a minute, okay? So what does it mean to you to be black?

Ruby: Wow.

Bonga: Well to me, I think it's…a tricky question but also at the same time it's… easy. It depends what…you mean… in this context means that you have more opportunities than, maybe, your ancestors had…considering the history of South Africa…black people being oppressed, and all that. Um, but then at the same time, it means that…there's a…black, middle and upper class that is rising at the moment…the whole BEE… For me personally, being black means that I can now in this context…embrace who I am and not feel a sense of inferiority to anyone… basically being able to access anything that I want to access…without the structural constraints that were there previously… in a practical sense for everyone, of course… it differs from place to place and context to context, but ja.

Slindile: Okay, thank you for sharing that. Anyone else?

Ruby: I think for me right now, all that's been going on, like, in America and here as well…after the Rhodes Must Fall…I think black as oppression…right now. I get what you're saying…there's opportunities and stuff, but …I think the constraints that are there are more covert than…during apartheid times. And I have become…more aware of it lately, you know? And yes, I'm privileged in some areas that other black people aren't…but I still feel oppressed, you know?

Ayanda: To add on to what she is saying…I kind of think being black in the general world…it's…being other 'cause the world is really white, if we're honest. And…you constantly have to explain yourselves as a black person and… Maybe that's just me.

Bonga: That's true.

Slindile: So you are saying you agree with her?

Bonga: Ja, I do…I was thinking…there's a paper that I am working…and…one of the arguments that I'm…trying to make there is that…the European way that over-represents itself as the universal standard for everyone… I have to write in a specific way according to certain standards that were set by some dead white guy out there…to say well this is how you write. And whereas if you consider…writing in an African way… it's almost non-existent because the…the system that is in place right now does not make it possible for that to happen.

Thembi: On the point of…oppression and…having to prove yourself, I find that black is exhausting…because [laughter] to constantly have to talk about that and constantly having to prove yourself or constantly having to beg people not to kill black people in America. And I'm at a point where I'm tired, so right now for me being black is a gruel state, if that's a thing...

Duma: I think, for me...It's really just a struggle for equality…structurally we have all these things that we say we have, and…on paper everything looks good. We all have all these rights all these people died for…but I think when you look at it…in a practical sense…the reality that black people have to live in is really striking. Because…the idea of a rainbow nation is that everyone is happy…whereas in actual fact that's not really the case…people have to fight to be heard and people have to fight for equality. And black people have to study twice as hard to be in UCT because…the resource…and those kind of things are not there for people.

I think…the state of South Africa has been…romanticized in a sense… And…suddenly… now…we're starting to question all those things like the Rhodes Must Fall…So I think…many other black people who have come to UCT have seen this as an achievement. And you…come to UCT and you think "oh my God I actually made it here, now let me survive it" whereas, you don't really question the state of UCT itself. And…at this point…black is exhausting because you often have to question all those things around you. And it's…very challenging in that sense because…you never know when it's gonna end.

Sphe: I really, I don't know how I feel… but mainly because I think it's quite an open ended question …I see us, like…moving into this Western culture where we are struggling to be white…so in order for you to be articulate and to be heard, there's a certain…way you need to aim for or you need to speak…I can't say it's a bad thing… But…I feel…there is that pressure…to be white, you know?

What was commonly noted in most of the participants' responses is the idea that racial identity is something which is elusive or not easy to define. Indeed some participants felt overwhelmed by the question itself- which is clear from Gabi's statement "that's such a deep question "and Ruby's initial response of "wow" before she took time to contemplate a

response. This may of course be partly due to the obscurity of the question itself as it can be interpreted in several different ways. However, it also became clear that the psychological labour of pondering what meaning one finds from being black or coloured was overwhelming.

For most of the black participants, blackness or black identity is something which was perceived as having many negative associations. Whereas the coloured participants generally associated being coloured with being heavily stereotyped into an identity. Ideas such as inferiority, poverty, brokenness, oppression, struggling and lacking in opportunity were all associated with being black. For many, these were difficult thoughts to bear especially within the context of post-apartheid South Africa which speaks of opportunity and inclusion for all. The knowledge that many black people still experience difficulties in accessing resources and opportunities appeared to give rise to feelings of relative deprivation, the knowledge that one is at a disadvantage in comparison to people from other racial groups. Additionally it stirred within many, a sense of being embattled in a struggle to survive - in the world and at UCT- as the reality of everyday life falls short of the promises of freedom from their rainbow nation. This calls to mind the freedom-transcending deprivation described by Du Bois. That is, the realisation (in the midst of emancipation) that one is lacking on multiple dimensions, as they are instantly positioned in competition with rich, skilled, landed neighbours.

Coloured identity was also not easy to define for the participants, particularly because being coloured is a reflection of multiplicity. An apt description of this came from Trish who emphasised the difficulty in defining a racial identity with such variation, or as she described it "different forms of human being mixed together." For the coloured participants, being stereotyped proved to be a significant challenge. Coupled with the sense that there was no all-encompassing conceptualisation of coloured identity, being stereotyped according to behaviour, appearance, upbringing, religion, and accent was characteristic of many of the participants' accounts. Some participants felt more harshly judged by others within their own racial group, particularly if they did not conform to typical coloured characteristics. In these cases, acceptance could be found outside one's own racial group, where one's identity did not have to be fixed to their level of "colouredness."

Based on the participant's accounts in general, it would seem that being "less coloured" was often circumstantial and not undertaken as a conscious decision. This was quite a stark contrast to the experiences of black participants who spoke of having to consciously shed part

of their blackness in order to get positive recognition, success or acknowledgement in the world. This appeared to be an inherent burden common to black identity. Some participants described it as a trap of having to assimilate whiteness in speech and behaviour in order to be taken seriously. It is a trap in the sense which Tumi explained where one is living to seek approval, while there is a persistent doubt if the approval will ever be truly received. (This is discussed in greater detail in a forthcoming section.)

Common in the experience of being black and coloured was the notion of being the 'other'. On the one hand, this derived from an awareness of the world being "overwhelmingly white" as Ayanda described. Being surrounded by images of whiteness both at UCT and through various media outlets appeared to have some influence in making participants feel more self-aware as outsiders or the 'other'. For some this was amplified by recent student activism calling for decolonisation of the UCT campus. Coloured participants also remarked feeling like outsiders among other coloured people, although this tended to be context specific. Examples given included schools, neighbourhoods, and churches. This was also related to the degree of their colouredness.

The majority of participants did not express pride in their racial identity, although this is not be to be interpreted conversely as shame. Nevertheless, there appeared to be some resistance and avoidance in accepting the label of being black or coloured, either presently or at some point in the past. One characteristically avoidant response came from Emily who (when asked if skin colour was part of her identity) commented that "by default, I don't like to categorise myself" although she later admitted that she would identify as coloured if it was absolutely necessary. This was echoed by John, who expressed that he chooses to detach from identifying as black since this term carries baggage which he does not identify with.

Although many participants agreed that there were negative associations with their racial identity, particularly being black, some sought to make positive associations where possible. One example of this was assuming the more inclusive *African* identity or by placing emphasis on individuality and rejecting racial categorisation altogether. This was evident from the case of both Emily and John who, in spite of avoiding categorisation as coloured and black respectively, stated that they preferred to identify with being African. Often being African was perceived in a more positive light, as an identity which one can take pride in, subsequently other participants including Gabi, Nonto, Siya, Bonga, identified more positively with it.

It was clear from the participant's responses that racial identity played some role in how individuals perceived themselves and others. The meanings that were made from racial identity reflect similar research findings on black and African identity around the world such as Glenn (2008), Maddox & Chase (2004) and Cunningham (1997). In considering the articulation of colourism it is important to draw attention to the aspects of racial identity which have been described here, as these bear some influence on this phenomenon. The perception of blackness as tainted and inferior, feelings of relative deprivation and experiences of being the 'other' in an overwhelmingly white world, may all play a part in a shift towards colourism as a way of being. Similarly these reflect how white supremacy operates silently, but continuously in the background of both black and coloured identity.

Skin tone valuations and the colourism hierarchy

The relationship between white supremacy, racism and colourism provides some indication that constructions of racial identity may play a crucial role in the articulations of colourism. This applies particularly to the disparate valuations of light and dark skin tone, where lighter skin is often appraised more positively than darker skin. Findings from the interviews showed consensus among the participants across all groups that this was indeed the case. The following extracts illustrate a general awareness of the differences in human value attached to different skin tones.

Black male and female group

> Slindile: Okay, so what I am generally hearing is that as different people have different experiences of being black. So it feels a certain way for you specifically, to be in your own skin…so now when it comes to, as black people relating to other black people…do you feel that light skin and dark skin is valued differently within the black racial group?

> Sphe: Ha, yellow bones [laughter] is seen as the…beautiest skin colour…And even guys, that's the kind of tone…they…run to. You know it's…very rare to…see…guys being really interested in…dark beauty…kind of lady. So, in terms of that skin difference…that's what… I've seen.

> Duma: I think for me… things like yellow bone and all those things are more recent…but…in terms of…skin tone, lighter skin has always been the better…it has always been…that the closer you are to the white man, the better you are…The thing of skin tone has always been there and people have always associated lighter skin with being beautiful. And I think the reason for that has been…a white person has all this privilege and should you be closer to that it…represents that you are also better, you know?

> I am Xhosa…if you are rich and you're a black person, we call you *umlungu* and that's…a white person [laughter] …we don't say you are a rich black person, we call you *umlungu*. And the reason for that has been because the white person is really seen as superior and I think same applies to skin tone. People have always made it a mission for themselves to look lighter because being white is better.

> Ayanda: Um, can I just agree with what he was saying about how…this isn't really a new thing? 'Cause I know…in my family, I'm also Xhosa and…some of my aunts would be, like, "well your brother's better looking than you, 'cause he is a lot more light-skinned"…Even…how we name our kids. If your child is born light, you name him Khanya which is light...[laughter] And if they're darker skinned then no one really cares about them.

But it's so interesting to see…people our age, there's this whole social… network movement where people are saying…all kinds of black is beautiful. Well, yeah, it's beautiful…it doesn't matter if you're light-skinned or if you're dark-skinned…which is very nice to see.

Coloured female (Individual)

Slindile: So, do you think, then, that different shades of skin…are valued differently amongst coloured people?

Trish: Definitely…it's funny actually, because… even in my household, in the family…if you're a bit, "oh, I'm lighter than you" or "I'm so dark"… And…what value does it add to anyone's life? …There's a lot of trying to be lighter and more white.

Slindile: And what does it mean? So when they say, I'm lighter than you?

Trish: It's like they automatically think they're better, or they're better looking, like they're some kind of Supreme Being [laughter].

Slindile: Okay, yeah, and you obviously don't agree that that's the case.

Trish: I don't. I won't lie, I also used to tease my sister a lot, because my sister's slightly darker than I am, so I would be like, "I'm lighter than you!" But now when I think back, I'm like, why? What's the difference? It doesn't make me any better.

Slindile: Okay. So…you mentioned earlier to me something about how you had been called a yellow bone, previously, and that affected you in some way. Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Trish: Yeah… I just hate the term yellow bone, because I'm not yellow, I'm brown! [Laughter]. And like…I said, people think that the lighter you are the prettier you are, so I'm just like, does my…beauty stem from the colour of my skin? And if so, then that's just horrible...

Slindile: And how…did the situation happen when…you got to a point where you got called yellow bone, what was happening?

Trish: It started at school, like this was in the beginning stages of this whole, um, light skin, dark skin thing, where my friend…I think she said, you're not light-skinned, you are yellow… [Laughter]…And I didn't pay much mind to it…she would continuously call me yellow, and then I realised, it's a thing, people actually call people with a certain tone, I guess it's kind of yellow. But it's not! [laughter]…I don't know if it's…like a synonym for light skin? Yeah, like yellow bones and black skin, and I just feel…why do you have to classify me in that way? Because then they do treat you… I think guys do treat a yellow bone in a better way than they would someone who's darker, and it makes me feel bad.

The responses given here typify the reaction across all groups that being lighter skinned is generally considered better than darker skin and more attractive. This is not necessarily a view which light skinned individuals agree with, although it is generally understood as the prevailing perception. However, it is also notable from Trish's example that in spite of her current disagreement with the discriminatory valuations of skin tone, there was a point in her development where she had internalised the idea of "lighter is better" for herself. This was evidenced by her admittedly teasing her sister for being slightly darker.

Duma's account elaborates on the notion that lighter skin is better from a slightly different perspective. He explained from his context how certain privileges such as wealth (which carries a high social status), meant that an individual becomes acknowledged as a white person. So, not only does lighter skin entitle one to privileges, but having a high social status also means that individuals can be informally upgraded to the lightest racial group, that is, white.

The designation of light skinned individuals into a named category of "yellow bones" is yet another example of the status and privilege conferred upon the lighter skinned. In response to this however, there appeared to be a movement towards embracing the equality of all skin tones, as Ayanda briefly described. Throughout the interviews, several participants described how they have come to take pride in their own skin colour and embrace various skin tones besides the light skin ideal.

A unique finding came from the coloured female group, where the meaning attached to different skin tones revealed a more complex interplay between valuations of skin tone and racial constructions. This is illustrated below.

Coloured female group

> Slindile: Okay so do you think that now when it comes to skin, that different shades of skin are valued differently in the coloured community?
>
> Anke: Ja, I think so.
>
> Slindile: Like, from your personal experience?
>
> Jessica: Um, I don't think I've…personally experienced that but… I go to Manenberg and it was actually my first time in…a real coloured community, kind of, township. And…when you see the children play with each other…maybe not necessarily…sort of…they do see lighter as in better and… Okay…there's these two little…the black two kids and…they're…sometimes excluded from the main group, so. Like, it's from a young age you can see that already happening.

Anke: … From what I've learnt over the years is there's this idea that the lighter your skin, I don't know, the better you are. It feels weird to say but when I was a child…I didn't want to be in the sun too long, so…the reason why I didn't want to be in the sun too long is because I wanted lighter skin so that I can attract…a white guy, you know? But I grew up knowing that…it's the inside that counts so that's not such a big thing. But I notice with a friend of mine she, she's mixed race…her dad's coloured and her mom's black…but she doesn't want to be in the sun, and she hasn't…overtly said it but…there's…this idea that the lighter the skin the better it is, you know? But that's not true, so.

Emily: Um, kind of, the same experience as yours [making reference to Jessica] but…in those kind of areas the, um, I guess you can divide coloured people if that makes sense. Like, you get the kind of community as a whole and then you get… different kinds of coloured people.

Slindile: Have you seen…or have you witnessed that…maybe darker skinned coloured people are treated differently from lighter skinned coloured people?

Emily: Sometimes darker skin coloured people with a certain type of hair who is actually coloured would be considered black…Whereas maybe…they would be confused because they don't sound coloured, so these guys sound white, so then the whole mixed race comes in.

Anke: Ja, That's true.

Emily: Like, I'm darker than the two of them, so ja. But sometimes people confuse me for being Indian or Muslim…[laughter]

Slindile: So would that then, does it make you more coloured if you have lighter skin or less coloured?

Emily: Um...

Anke: I don't know really.

Slindile: Or is it, kind of, a mixture of things that are making you less of a coloured person?

Emily: I think it's more the way you act.

Anke: Ja.

Jessica: Ja, it's more the behaviour hey.

Emily: Maybe not so much the way you look

Jessica: I think… it's just, you…more attractive as a lighter, or you're… perceived as being more attractive, um, ja but maybe not more or less.

Emily: Ja. But if I dressed…really nicely or whatever, then they'd say I'm coloured but…maybe they'd say I'm mixed…I'm, like, half coloured, half white type of thing. So that does play a role.

Jessica: That's true. [laughter]

Slindile: Okay. I'm hearing quite a bit of this… difference between being a mixed person and being a coloured person, so explain to me how that works?

Jessica: Um, so mixed is basically when your parents are different colours, so you first generation. And then coloured, I guess…is when both your parents are coloured.

Slindile: And these are different classes of coloured?

Jessica: From what I've learnt is that a friend of mine, she sees… Okay let me just bring it back on to myself…it's like white, mixed, coloured and then, ja. So it's almost like… they're better.

Emily: Mm because… it's all that thing that white is better.

This extract highlights two key issues for the coloured participants. Firstly, valuations of skin tone appear to be intertwined with racial hierarchies. The example given by Jessica of an experience with children playing in Manenberg (a racially mixed black and coloured community) shows that valuation of skin may not only be concerned with tone but also related to race. Notwithstanding the subjectivity of Jessica's observations, there may, of course, be several possible explanations which account for this segregation among children during play. If racial relations were taken into consideration as Jessica understood it, it would appear that from a young age children may be aware that black and coloured hold different meanings (with black possibly being the inferior position) in spite of living in the same community.

Anke reiterated this from her own childhood experience of having some awareness of the value of a lighter skin tone. Through her efforts to avoid the sun she expressed a desire to access benefits of being lighter skinned, particularly the prospect of upward social mobility which could come from marrying outside of her race (marrying a white person in particular). In other words, she believed that by becoming lighter she could become more desirable to a white male as a potential mate, and gain access to the privileges of being white. Therefore, one might add that she had a desire to "pass" for white. This desire itself can be understood as the "neurosis of blackness" which was discussed at length in the literature review of this study. However, the specific behaviours stemming from this neurosis can be interpreted as a form of "passing", where an individual attempts to leave behind the oppression of their

previous identity and assume a new identity in order to access privileges and prestige (Phoenix, 2014).

The second issue highlighted here is how the supremacy of whiteness continues to play a significant role in racial valuations of the *coloured* racial category as a whole. Passing for white also applies in this case as white spouses may still be considered by some as more desirable partners. Participants explained that the term *coloured* encapsulated many aspects apart from race including ones behaviour and dress code. Here, valuations of individuals could occur on multiple dimensions which ultimately determine whether you are ranked as mixed race, coloured or black. These rankings are themselves a value-laden arrangement of individuals but more importantly, they reflect particular positions in relation to whiteness. The hierarchy order begins with white occupying the superior position, followed by mixed race, coloured and then other races in the lowest ranking. Participants explained that skin tone and other features, may affect how individuals are ranked in the racial hierarchy. The most favourable ranking was mixed race. Participants reported that this was held in high esteem, particularly if one parent of the mixed-race individual was white.

Gendered articulations of colourism

According to Phoenix (2014), colourism intersects with sexism in a way which disempowers women of colour, therefore it is important to make sense of its highly gendered nature from a feminist point of view. A great deal of research would support this assertion. Hunter (2011) showed that valuations attached to various skin tones mean that skin serves an important function as social capital, symbolic capital and economic capital for women in particular. Keith and Herring (1991) found that often women with lighter skin tend to have better life outcomes than their darker skinned counterparts in terms of education levels, employment, and marriage. Glenn (2008) and Phoenix (2014, p.102) observed that worldwide, women are systematically targeted by cosmetic industries through subliminal messaging which constructs people of colour as "ugly but remediable" offering skin and body modification products as solutions to remedy their ugliness. Valuations of skin tone, as they interact with gender, account for a significant understanding of the articulations of colourism. Excerpts in the following section illustrates this intersectionality.

Black female group

> Slindile: Alright, now I want to pick up on something that you'd said about… starting to be made aware of the difference between you and people from other races, but…also… realising that there's different shades of people that look like you. What is it like, I mean, becoming aware of that? And what impact did that have, becoming aware of…different skin shades?

> Nonto: Ah, for me it wasn't…good because obviously…the way that it was brought up was that light skin was better because I remember…my cousin was… light and I was dark...But she was always praised for being…a beautiful child [laughter]

> So I think the way it was pointed out…it wasn't in a negative way… people didn't say, "oh you're dark, you're ugly"…At home no one ever said anything, so I only got the one image of light is better…so I had to get to my own conclusions, whereas other people who grew up being dark but their families instilled that they're good enough, they never had the issue of "oh, I'm dark". So the parents also play an issue.

> Rumbi: Now in terms of the skin colour…I think it's because of the guys. Ja, men actually they say, I don't know, they get attracted to ladies like you (pointing at the interviewer) ja. [laughter]

> Nonto; It's true, true.

> Gabi: No, but it's true.

> Rumbi: But I think also maybe it's the demand of society, especially from guys. They are claiming that the light skin guys and ladies are nicer…maybe if somebody comes

to the room and see you [points toward the interviewer] they will not see us so [laughter] I am thinking that's why, you know…

Slindile: So you guys agree it, there's sort of a dynamic between men and woman that perpetuates this thing?

Gabi: For sure…definitely…because for me, that's how I got to see the whole thing of the attractive side and the not attractive side. 'Cause it's like I said, most of my friends… were light-skinned, like you, and as such, when…we'd go out in social situations, they'd always be the one that guys went to… And if they ever came to me it was to get with my friend.

Nonto: Ja, that's true.

Gabi: So in my mind I was, like, okay…because I am not that light skinned, I'm clearly…not attractive. And then obviously you have the Beyoncé's and…the Rihanna's…those are…the symbols of beauty and…that's what you want to look like... So for me definitely that's how I realised that…I'm probably…not as attractive, that the lighter skinned girls are definitely the ones who will get the boyfriend. They definitely the ones who get the attention.

Slindile; So then I want to ask a follow up question…how do you as a woman look at a man's skin? So you are very aware of how men look at your skin and the…evaluations that come from that. So when you look at a man's skin… how do you make an evaluation?

Nonto: Ah, for me…obviously I always preferred…lighter people because obviously it's…to benefit my kids, you know? But it's only as I am growing up…the more pride I start to get about my skin, the more I change my perception of the way I see guys. Because I always…saw it as a complimentary process…for the sake of my kids… At least…they will have different struggles…And even…black guys…there was a point where I just didn't like them because I just felt like it's so unfair how they… treat us, sort of, to be substandard. So I was, like, I am going to get myself a white guy, I don't have time for this. But it's only…as I am starting to…embrace my skin colour and I'm more… proud of it, you know what I mean?

Rumbi: Okay… in terms of skin colour for men actually…for me personally, I don't consider skin colour when I am dating. It's character…I don't want a guy maybe a nice skin…then you misbehave. He treat me badly, you know, I want to be spoilt so [laughter]… For me, I want to be treated nicely and I look at character. And what I can't stand, it's a short guy [laughter]

Gabi: So great! [laughter]…because I agree with her 150%... When I was younger …I was having crushes on the white boys, I wanted a white boy. Then I got into high school and I said no…I want a coloured guy. I want to have coloured babies because in my mind…I didn't want my kids to go through what I went through in terms of,

you're the black one, you're the ugly one…So I was, like, it will probably be better if I date a light-skinned guy…probably be nicer.

Then I did and they're all the same… [laughter] there was nothing special…As I grew into myself, as I grew to love my skin, I was, like, but actually when you think about it…no, I actually prefer…a darker skinned man. I don't know, for me there's something very attractive, very raw and gritty about that. So for me… as it is now, it's not that I'm gonna say "no, if you're this skin or that skin tone, I'm not going to date you". But I definitely have more pride in terms of the darker skin tone in men and obviously…But again, it comes down to, you need to be taller than me.

Coloured female (individual)

Slindile: Okay. And so, then do you feel like it's different in general…for men than it is for women… I mean, let's just think about the skin issue, having light skin and… darker skin.

Trish: I honestly think males have it so easy. [Laughter]. Cause, generally women are more…caring and understanding and whatever, so…I don't think females…look at the colour of their skin… You get to know the person… But obviously…you're first attracted by what you see, and sometimes people have preferences, and I wouldn't really say that I have a preference…but people are sometimes more attracted to a certain type of look than another, so…I think when it comes to guys, it's whatever…You might be surprised…you might be attracted to a certain person's look and then…they're not what you really want. Or not be attracted to a certain person, be friends, and then you realise…this is a great person.

Slindile: So do you feel that women are judged more harshly?

Trish: Definitely…We have…pressure [laughter] yeah, in terms of appearance.

Slindile: Okay…what is that pressure about?

Trish: Just looking good…and it's actually quite funny [laughter] when you think about it, because we don't want to fit in, we want to stand out. But then the features of beauty, it's this one thing, and we all want to look like that, but we don't want to, we want to stand out. It doesn't make sense.

Slindile: Okay. So then…when you think of how you look at men, and let's say coloured men specifically…what comes to mind, or what associations do you make with a dark-skinned coloured guy?

Trish: I don't… really think I have associations, really. 'Cause…this doesn't really have much to do with… skin tone, but I think guys are judged on the way they dress….

Black male and female group

Slindile: ...You brought up that there is a gender dynamic…that you don't hear as much of a bias about skin coming from girls towards guys…first of all, do you, as guys, agree with that?

Sphe: Mm.

Bonga: Yeah.

Thembi: But isn't it always the case that women…have more…pressure on them when it comes to looks? So it's a bigger thing for women to be light-skinned because so many standards rest on women anyway…So, yes it happens both sides but…The standard of beauty is higher for girls, so I think…skin tone would be more applicable to girls…That's my understanding of why it's so gendered.

Sphe: Okay…then just on that…I would think if I am to aim to look, say, better than I am right now…I would not buy…stuff to get myself lighter, but I would probably hit the gym, you know?... start running…do stuff which…are gonna present me as more manly and…strong, you know?

Bonga: … I get what you're saying and it's the prevalent stereotype…but then from a personal viewpoint, I think that's more fairy tale nonsense …because I see a lot of pressure nowadays for guys to look a certain way because, well, America has presented us with a certain standard…the movies that we watch, you know?

But then… both guys and girls…it puts them in a position whereby they have to go out of their way to be a specific person that will attract a specific person…In the process of doing that then they can't be themselves because…for a girl...you know, she has to be lighter skinned or whatever. And for a guy, for him to attract a certain girl then he has to have…a six pack…dress in a certain way. It makes sense to a certain extent but then…I don't subscribe to those.

Duma: …I agree with what you said…obviously I am not going to generalize for everyone, but I think…often, guys look at the physique first and everything else would follow… I think that…it's not intentional but to some level people are conforming to those standards.... Even if you don't want to, but… these pressures are just around us regardless…And I think we've… set classes for certain people that if you are…physically fit…you're supposed to attract certain girls. And…if you are a yellow bone that has a certain body structure, you can only be dating someone like this and all that.

Slindile: Alright. So I just wanna hear from you…what is it like, as a woman…How does the light skin, dark skin thing play out for you guys when it comes to men?

Thembi: Well two points. One, I think the Colourism thing, when you talk about guys dating, wanting to date light-skinned girls…because she's better, can even extend to the point where a guy will date an ugly white girl just to see himself dating a white

person because she's better. And that is something that happens, that I have seen happen that is unfortunate, but is something that's out there.

Two, experiencing, as a black girl…in primary school the boys used to call me…king kong, black mamba…So I didn't know I was dark until someone told me I was dark, and then I took that on myself for a very long time. And so obviously and I thought dark wasn't beautiful, whatever…

And…when you walk into a room, I mean, maybe I'm ugly, it's possible, but when I walk into a room the first attraction is them, it's the lighter skin girl. Um, so I can't necessarily say it's because I'm ugly or if it's because I'm dark, I'm not really sure but I…think that's how I experience it.

Slindile: So…when it comes to you and the kind of guys that you select, is it something that you would look at?

Thembi: The kind of skin? Um, no I don't think so. I don't think it's even…a thing. I don't think…things like that…but I don't know if I am fetishizing it now, but I would rather go with someone who has dark skin… I don't know if I generally like people with dark skin but that's where I am now. But in general it's not…a thing for someone to be light, that I think they're better. If anything, I think they're probably more stressful than anything… [laughter]

Ruby: Wow. Mm, I don't think I'm fazed by it…skin tone. I mean, I used to say I like…darker guys. I think I only dated darker guys but not…consciously, like…he's dark, he's…good looking. I don't know, no, not a thing.

Ayanda: Um, I don't have a preference either…It's just guys [laughter]

Based on the above excerpts it can be inferred that valuations of skin colour are intimately linked to gender to the extent that gender can mediate perceptions of skin tone. Several other important findings can be highlighted from this. First, it was agreed upon in all the groups by men and women, that there is greater societal pressure placed on women in terms of appearance in general. This pressure often meant that higher standards of beauty applied to women and not necessarily men. This also extended to skin tone such that men and women agreed that lighter skin is considered more desirable for women. These ideas reflect literature findings which suggest that racism and colourism lead to the privileging of light skin whilst patriarchal patterns of desire mean that women are still judged disproportionately on their looks (Hooks, 2003). This is exacerbated by the prevalence of colourism in media where women of colour who are visible as media stars are more likely to have light skin and European features (Phoenix, 2014). One example of the impact of this was Gabi's evaluations

of herself upon realising that she did not have features similar to celebrities like Rihanna and Beyoncé.

Women also expressed that often a lighter skin tone was rewarded by men, as light-skinned women were considered more attractive and given more attention in everyday social interactions. Several dark-skinned women (Thembi, Nonto, Gabi and Rumbi) gave similar first-hand accounts of witnessing (currently or in the past) lighter skinned friends receiving greater attention from men, whilst their dark skin was mocked, degraded or simply ignored. An example of this was given by Thembi who reported to have observed, at the extremities of this phenomenon, that black men are willing to date an "unattractive white woman" because light (white) skin is highly valued. The accounts given by these four women also emphasise another consequence of gender on colourism. That is, the shared experience among dark skinned women of being rendered either ugly or invisible.

Most black and coloured women expressed no preference when it came to the skin tone of men they chose as romantic partners. However, among those who did submit to a preference, darker skinned men were the overwhelming choice. It should be noted too, that this was observed among the women who reported having previously been ignored, or treated in a "substandard' manner by light-skinned men in particular. Ruby stated her reasons for any preference for darker skin as unconscious, while Thembi, Nonto, and Gabi cited mistreatment from light skinned men, fetishizing darker skin and the perceived masculinity of a darker skin tone among their motivations. On one hand, it can be suggested that their preference for darker skinned men is a reaction to a traumatic experience associated with not having lighter skin, and being previously ostracised by men. Ultimately however, this response demonstrates one significant way in which gender mediates articulations of colourism. The overall effect of gender means that darker skin renders women invisible and ugly, while having the opposite effect for men, where they can be considered handsome, rugged and masculine.

Even though literature firmly supports the assertion that colourism effects are more adverse for women, findings from this research would suggest that black men are also subject to discrimination regardless of where they might find themselves on the skin colour spectrum. When considering their associations with different skin tones, black men gave descriptions such as "dirty, thug, ugly, con-artist" to describe dark skin, while lighter skin evoked descriptions such as "delicate, emotional, wealthy" and "charmer." What emerges from these

descriptions is the idea of lighter skin having more positive (wealthy and charmer) but simultaneously, feminine traits (delicate and emotional). Therefore, while lighter skin is considered more desirable for women, the feminine associations mean that they may be less desirable for men to have.

Although most women added that they generally do not make evaluations of potential male partners based on skin tone, they did admit to considering dress code, personal grooming habits and height. This coincided with black male accounts of how they felt evaluated by women. The following passage from the black male interview elaborates on these ideas by illustrating some of the ways in which colourism affects both light and dark skinned black men.

Black male group

> Slindile: So now…I want to start talking about how we value skin as black people and how we value light skin and how we value dark skin. So…first of all do you think that there's a difference in the way that we value skin?
>
> Siya: Yes.
>
> Tumi: Yes.
>
> John: Definitely.
>
> Slindile: Okay, so that's unanimous. [Laughter] Okay…Tumi you can start, um, and just explain to me in…what way.
>
> Tumi: …Our one cousin, actually, that was dark-skinned in the whole family…my whole family is light-skinned, it was always just, was just odd. [laughs]…I could see that there was…a different type of treatment. For example, I'd be allowed to go to sports practices and all of that stuff, but the moment my cousin said that he needs to go to a sports practice, or whatever, it was, like, but you need to do your chores.
>
> Siya: What? [Laughter]
>
> Tumi: No…to me I thought…there were reasons why they saying this…But now when I look back on it…I don't even think my family was conscious of what they were doing. So that…was my first and earliest black memory of that kind of discrimination, I don't know.
>
> And then when I moved to Johannesburg, it changed, because now in Johannesburg there are a whole lot of dark-skinned people. And being light-skinned is…not a problem but there are certain things that are gonna come up about being light-skinned as…you're emotional…you probably are the first-born…
>
> John: Soft as well.

Tumi: Ah, you're soft, you know, we might call your sexuality into question for no apparent reason, oh…you're really good at the ladies as well though.

Siya: Ja, that one, ja. [Laughter]

Tumi: So it's like…you're really good at the ladies but you might be homosexual… you constantly need to man up where other people are allowed to cry. You… should hold yourself back from participating in certain activities, like watching chick flicks as much as the dark-skinned guy does because obviously you're light-skinned. So the interpretation of you watching a chick flick is different from the interpretation of a…dark-skinned person watching a chick flick, you know what I mean? So…you had to play rugby…You need something that's gonna add to your…

Slindile: Masculinity?

Tumi: Your masculinity, you know what I mean? You need to play…water polo so that you can get just a tan or be darker a bit…There are things that you need to do as a light-skinned person to balance what another black person's gonna say about you and what…you would like to be out there…you just need to compensate.

But then at the same time, there are perks. But…if you overstep your mark in your access to these perks then you are labelled a very different kind of light-skinned nigger than the one that doesn't…Then you're a snob, you're… They've come up with a… I don't know, is this is this PG13 or…?

Slindile: It's okay.

Tumi: You're a fuck boy, you know what I mean? Like…if you access the perks and you're good at the ladies and…you dress well and all of that stuff and you're light-skinned, then you're a fuck boy. But if you don't do those things, then you're just weak and emotional and basically a loser... It's very difficult to find a middle ground, you're always trying to balance…how you're gonna be perceived…

Slindile: Okay. Kind of, like, treading that line? That fine line between…being perceived negatively and…

Tumi: No, you'll always be perceived negatively. It's very difficult to be perceived positively. Like, even girls…they say…at a particular point of their maturity…they want a dark-skinned, tall guy, whatever. That's what…they aspire to. But while they're in varsity, the light-skinned guy that dresses well, is articulate…good-looking, he will do for social status and whatever. But once she's mature…

Siya: She wants a real man.

Tumi: And a woman or whatever, she wants a real man.

Khwezi: A very interesting perspective from the yellow bone [laughter]…
Because…the dark guys…I don't know, we don't even have a name…We don't even
have brown bones [laughter]

Siya: Yes, pathetic.

Khwezi: Only until the end…maybe the girls…will want the tall dark guy, the more
mature they get…But the…whole entire time we're having it rough.

Slindile: How so?

Khwezi: It's like, at school you get picked on…you're really dark…It's all over
school and even, your grandparents or people in the community…it comes from
everywhere, you always constantly have to…prove yourself even when it comes to
ladies...The, guys who are yellow bones, like you said…they do well with the ladies.
The dark guys have to work extra hard.

John: Ja…I feel like you guys have it all, man. Like you guys get it nice 'cause
honestly, especially the ladies part is big. [Laughter]

Siya: Yeah, ne? Ja.

John: And that, that makes a big part of it 'cause…even in a group of guys, the lighter
guy is kind of, regarded differently… his background is probably different. Like, from
where I'm from if…you're, lighter means…

Tumi: More affluent.

John: Ja… It attaches a…class to it…you've been brought up better just by
accessing…that consort of…being light-skinned.

Siya: Ja…I would basically say also…my best friend from East London is light-
skinned…And I'm telling you this, that guy beats me…70% of the time…And he
doesn't even need to say anything. We just rock up…

Slindile: Just when it comes to the ladies?

Siya: I'm talking about ladies, yes. We just rock up and I know the first person who's
gonna get attention is him. They have to…get used to me a bit and…maybe then…
[laughter]

John: Say some jokes.

Siya: Ja, I have to be funny.

Khwezi: You…have to have a personality when you're a dark guy, you know?

Siya: So I found that generally…when it comes to light-skinned guys, ladies go crazy,
man…And I don't think that…it's particularly that the guy is more good-looking than

the other but I think maybe light-skinned seems cleaner. Maybe light-skinned people look cleaner than, than the dark-skinned people.

The above interaction reflects some of the tensions underlying the experience of being a black male on either side of the skin tone spectrum. Both light and dark skinned males attested to having faced discrimination, albeit for different reasons. For instance dark skinned men expressed that they were discriminated against from early on in their life for not being attractive, resulting in less success in the dating market. Whilst the light skinned male in the group (Tumi) shared how this discrimination mostly occurs later in life for light skinned men (from both men and women). From his perspective, the nature of existence as a light skinned man is a precarious balancing act of handling negative perceptions and accessing the so-called benefits of one's lightness. What was equally fascinating was how sentiments shared by Tumi were echoed by a few females in the heterogeneous group. The passage below highlights the correlation.

Black male and female group

Sphe: But it's a thing, I think, amongst guys… The, what they call "light-skinned niggers".

Ayanda: Oh, yeah.

Sphe: Um, they…it's not something that, well girls aspire to… get. But then the guys themselves that are light-skinned feel that they are more superior to other guys and they can basically get any girl that they want. Of course, I'm generalising here, but… it seems to be a trend amongst light-skinned niggers that they seem to think that they are the best thing since sliced bread.

Thembi: I think it is a two-way thing where the light-skinned girls are better and prettier and the light-skinned guys are supposedly supposed to get all the girls. But from my perspective [laughter]...I don't want to say…light-skinned guys are weaker or whatever, but… if you do take your skin that seriously…I cannot take it that seriously... So I'm not actually saying they're stupid or weaker but I think if you literally take your skin tone…that seriously and it means something, I personally…I don't have time for that. [laughter]

Sphe: Nobody's got time for that.

Based on these findings it can be concluded that skin tone intersects with gender in ways which outline distinct experiences of colourism for men and women. The values given to skin

are not fixed, in fact appear to change with gender. Light skin is regarded more positively in females, but less so in males. While dark skin is regarded more positively for males than for females. However, the prevailing view among the participants was that lighter is still considered better. For coloured participants, skin tone valuations also interacted with race such that being mixed-race (with one white parent) was considered best. This idea can be taken as a reflection of the supremacy of whiteness still operating to influence the construction of coloured identity, much like it did during apartheid in the creation of the coloured racial category.

Trauma and the progression of colourism

Experiences of racism and other forms of ethnoviolence may have traumatic effects on victims to the extent that they can engender trauma-related symptoms such as helplessness and fear (e.g. Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005; Carter, 2007; Helms, Nicolas & Green, 2010). Colourism is unique in that it functions as an extension of racism through its collusion with white supremacy, but it can also have traumatic effects on individual identity and sense of self as individuals internalise messages that they are unattractive, unintelligent, and lesser human beings. It is a form of trauma twice experienced: as it is enacted on people of colour through racist incidents, and as they begin to enact it on themselves or others within their racial group. As a non "life-threatening" form of trauma, the historical roots of colourism injuries may be difficult to trace as these may often be invisible or transmitted inter-generationally via experiences of cultural trauma. That is, when a dramatic loss of identity from racist discrimination toward people of colour as a collective, is transferred inter-generationally. This process causes a tear in the social fabric of the collective identity, as people of colour experience directly or indirectly, the pain of what it means to be black.

What became evident from the interviews was trauma's close relationship with experiences of being black and coloured. Traumatic effects of racism could be observed particularly when it came to the associations made with skin colour, and how this was assimilated into one's identity. The excerpts below capture participant's responses showing various traumatic effects that racism has on their identities. Worth noting are how the responses resemble classical symptoms of trauma listed earlier as criteria B, C, D and E in the DSM V diagnostic for posttraumatic stress disorder.

Black female group

> Slindile: So do you feel like…the presence of other races makes you more aware of your blackness, or of your Africanness?
>
> Gabi: It's in you…you have no choice but to be aware of it just based on the history...it just comes back to apartheid and what that did to us and the remnants that it left, and as a result you will be aware that, that's a black person, that's a white person.
>
> Nonto: Okay…I came from Eastern Cape, so…there…everyone was black, so you don't really…see lighter people and darker people. But…I went to preschool with…white kids and then that was the first time I was…different from all these other people.

Then I was…sort of looking at them and admiring them and thinking, "wow, they're so pretty". And then,…that's when I…thought, okay, I also want to be white…[laughter] You know that there was childhood things we've got, you know, that hair thing, we want bangs...

Black male group

Slindile: So from what you are saying, your blackness is also…a universal concept. So you can identify with a black person in America or…somewhere else in the world. Do you feel like this?

Tumi: Mm. We share…a common theme in terms of our identity with being African, or at least the pain of…that part of history, you know what I mean? And so on that basis, we can all identify with each other… It's not like there's any black person in the world that had it better than any other black person in terms of history.

I think black personally is beautiful. I never saw anything wrong with being black until I was in an environment where there was white people, you see? And…it was a privilege.

John: I think the…concept of…blackness…carries a lot of baggage that I don't identify with...I think I'd identify with African more than…black… I detach those two… And I think the reason why people speak about…blackness, comparing it to Europeans…rises from a sense of…frustration…I think people are frustrated, man. You saw the Rhodes Must Fall thing…

Slindile…Just as an indication from you then, do you identify being black as part of your identity?

John: Okay…There's an intersection in being black as recognizing that you are part of…a race that's constructed under…slavery like in all these institutions that refer to us as black. Us people as, being in our cultures in…our countries…however different they are from each other…there's still that essential feature of being African that's still in that category of black. The black guy in America…could identify with that…in some cultural way. And we could still identify with a movement like Civil Rights because we went to independence and the whole struggle.

What can be deduced from these responses is a common thread of painfully re-experiencing (criterion B) blackness in relation to what it historically meant to be black. This included the conceptualisations of being black under apartheid and slavery in spite of the fact that none of the participants had direct exposure to any of these events. In addition, participants reported psychological pain associated with being black in relation to being white. Most recalled having the realisation that they are black as an unpleasant experience, and most often, one that occurred as a result of being exposed to white people or white culture. For instance,

Nonto's description of her first childhood encounter with white children is something which gave rise to neurosis of blackness within her. Her recognition of the white children's beauty inadvertently drew attention to her deficiencies, and garnered a desire for aspects of whiteness (such as hair) for herself. Nonto was not alone in this, several women (Ruby, Emily, Trish, Gabi, Thembi) reported at some point in their lives, either hating their skin, hair, nose or bodies because they were not the attractive ideal. This self-hatred (although not understood as such) is also reminiscent of symbolic violence in that they, without recognition, become complicit in their own inferiority, accepting the idea that they lacked in beauty because their bodies were not white. At times, this was recognised but justified as an impetus to avoid the pain of certain experiences. An example given earlier is when Trish mentioned how she wanted to date a partner with smooth hair as this would potentially offer her children a way out of a psychologically painful experience which she had to endure as a child.

Finally, the common pain arising from the awareness of one's blackness captured in Tumi's words: "I never saw anything wrong with being black until I was in an environment where there was white people…" may be something which participants may be faced with re-experiencing on a daily basis, through their exposure to racism and colourism through media, their social interactions and their immediate surroundings. It may also create hypervigilance (criterion E), as they are always made aware of their blackness and its various deficiencies.

For coloured participants the response was somewhat different. No stark awareness or realisation of one's colouredness was reported. Although, participants did describe feeling invisible to others in certain contexts. For most, questions of identity yielded no distinct answer. In fact, many felt no real motivation to attach any significance to the racial label of "coloured" identifying it as a box to stereotype people. This was indicative of the reluctance which these participants expressed in engaging with any racially motivated issues in general, and can be said to be consistent with symptoms of avoidance in relation to trauma. Avoidant symptoms (listed under criterion C) were noted in participant responses to issues of race, colourism and identity. This is when individuals may attempt to avoid stimuli associated with the memory of a particular traumatic event. In the case of colourism it is the attempt to avoid stimuli that may give rise to the psychological pain of being discriminated against due to skin tone. When asked if they ever discussed issues of colourism, particularly with those in their social networks or families, the majority of participants' said they did not. The excerpts below detail some of the responses to this question.

Black female group

Nonto: I've had the ideas but…it's very hard to bring it up because it just seems like…there's divisions…And once you bring it up it's like you are pulling down…the lighter girls. Whereas…sometimes…people you hang around with they don't even see it as a problem, so it's hard to actually bring it up…because people will just say why? What's your problem?

Gabi: Mm, I agree with you. I think it's also just trying not to create that division, if anything…most of my friends, I lie to them [laughter]…I don't think I've ever felt the need to…bring it up or to have conversation about it…it will probably be…if it was ever…to be sparked by something that I saw online. But even then, if I saw it myself, the chances of me going "did you guys see this thing?" It's probably not going to happen.

Nonto: Ja it all just happens inside

Rumbi: Ja

Gabi:…I probably wouldn't bring it up to my parents…And also…I feel like sometimes the light girls sometimes get defensive…when you are trying to bring it up…sometimes they portray as if you have issues of insecurity and that's why you're bringing it up. And it's not that we're not confident, but…obviously it serves you, so you don't have to fight the odds.

Black male and female group

Thembi: …my getting over being dark or whatever didn't come from school and I don't even think it would come from school, 'cause Colourism is not a thing we discuss. Like…I didn't understand sexism but then I'd got to university and…I get it…feminism…I am 100% behind it, but Colourism is not necessarily something that I would discuss.

Slindile: … Okay, and you mentioned earlier how your family obviously said certain things about your skin. How do you respond to that?

Ayanda: Um, I honestly don't think I was ever fazed by the whole thing... I mean…I've got a younger cousin who is a bit obsessed with the whole skin thing, skin tone, skin colour, whatever. And sometimes I hear, like, my aunt speaking about it and I'm just, like, what kind of a message are you sending to her? But…I tried to speak to her, and… no one really cares about this.

Coloured female individual

Slindile: In what ways do people react to this light skin, dark skin conflict?

Trisha: So sometimes every Thursday, we have a topic and the house comes together… and the latest one was beauty, and this whole light skin, dark skin, thing…I brought it up… cause I mentioned…all those different comparisons, the light skin, dark skin… thick versus skinny, natural versus… unnatural…and then the darker-skinned girls started talking about…how they feel bad because people think light skin is prettier and they don't necessarily think so, and I found myself quiet…I was like, am I quiet because I don't have anything to say, or am I quiet because I don't want to offend anyone? Cause…it…feels like, the fact that I feel bad about being…light-skinned…if I would have voiced that opinion, people would have looked at me like, you don't have a struggle, be quiet.

Slindile: So you…also felt discriminated against as a person with lighter skin?

Trish: Yes. And I don't think a lot of people realise that people with light skin also feel discriminated against, and like they've been treated differently because of their skin tone. I think it's just the whole beauty thing

Coloured female group

Slindile: …Have you guys thought about these issues before…and had discussions with other people about it?

Jessica: Oh ja, Although…I personally don't like talking about stuff like that because I just feel that the conversation should just end…it doesn't always interest me…cause when people get really passionate…you spending all this energy and …it's like you perpetuating it by speaking about it almost you know?

Emily: …I also try and avoid the public [cough] because people start arguing and they just shouldn't…In my experience no one really…brings up the topic. Everyone avoids it…

Anke: Oh, not really. Only with my family to my parents…because I'm a person that doesn't like to upset the apple cart so everything must…be fine between friends…

These and other responses given show an overall avoidance of the topic of colourism and issues of race. In Trish's case particularly, this avoidance was coupled with a sense of being silenced, as it dawned on her that her light skin possibly alienated her from others. This sentiment was shared by other light skinned females and males. Among the reasons for avoidance, participants cited feelings of discomfort, evading conflict, fearing negative reactions from others, and realising that others may not care about these issues.

Negative alterations in mood or cognition related to racism or colourism-related events were also noted throughout the participant responses (similar to PTSD criterion D).Though

different in every individual, these included persistent negative beliefs about oneself, feeling alienated from others, guilt and shame. Participants recalled being bullied or teased by family members and friends (usually of the same race) or having skin tone brought to their attention in other ways.

Black female group

> Gabi: …It would be friends of yours and then you're thinking these people are making fun of someone who is…a similar tone to me but they are sort of saying, no…it's not you, you are lighter than that person…and they were busy…laughing. And...I swear this word just stuck with me because I didn't even have to ask for a translation to know what it meant…but they were, like, hahaha! "*skobo*" hahahaha! "*skobo*"…when you translate that into the language…it's like…some sort of monstrous dark ugly thing. And for me the first thing was…but you yourself are pretty close to that skin tone so why are you doing that? …Secondly, I'm close to that skin tone. I'm standing…right here, so you might as well be calling me the same thing.

> Nonto: It always made me so uncomfortable…'cause everyone's…laughing and…I don't find anything funny about this 'cause this is me that you're making fun of.

> Rumbi: For us…it's only a particular tribe that is fair…that discrimination of people saying such it wasn't that much. Okay, you have some people who are very, very black. We even call them that they are black, like this chair. Maybe those ones you laugh at but on average…you just don't laugh or say anything because you are all basically the same.

Black male and female group

> Ruby: And it was funny, you know [laughter] I don't think it was funny to me. It was funny to them and…it affected me for a while after…as I grew up and I was, like…that was wrong, you know? And it was a thing for me. Now it's not, but I used to cry…you know?

> But my mom said, she as well when she was younger, her siblings…called her names because she was dark and I asked her, "Why didn't you say anything?" She's like, no 'cause I went through it as well.

> Slindile: It's almost normal.

> Ayanda: Ja.

> Sphe: Because I have not personally experienced…anything that I could say… it's, kind of, devastating being black. But I've actually seen, like, you know, things

on…TV, newspapers and You Tube…it's very…very disturbing, you know, to see such and as a black person.

Black male group

Tumi: …There's a cultural aspect to it…for example in my family, my mom sternly warns me not to mess up the gene pool by…introducing…a dark…baby into…you know what I mean? [laughter] She says…don't do that. Marry a white girl, Indian girl, light skinned black girl. She doesn't mind if she's Xhosa. She doesn't particularly like Xhosa women but she…knows that if she's Xhosa, she's probably light skinned. So, my mom has given me that stern warning…her sisters have given their sons that warning as well.

Two key observations can be made from the above excerpts. Though not formally recognised as a traumatic event, Sphe's account emphasises the impact that vicarious experiences can have by virtue of cultural association (in this case being black). Though he did not directly experience a traumatic racial experience, he reported being disturbed by images seen across various media platforms "as a black person". The shared feeling of victimisation also resonated with several participants as they reported being disturbed, and hurt by what they witnessed happening to fellow black people in other parts of the world. The second observation relates to the internalisation of racist or discriminatory ideas and perpetuating these to others. For instance, though Rumbi reported a general non-discrimination of skin tone in her context, she still conceded that some individuals are subject to humiliation- being likened to inanimate objects (chair) and laughed at for being too dark. Tumi also called attention to the internalisation of light skin valorisation in his own family, which was exemplified in his mother's stern warning against introducing dark skin into the family's gene pool. The notion of symbolic violence may again enhance the interpretation of this phenomenon insofar as it explains that internalisation of this idea is indicative of a passive compliance in accepting the racist idea that darker skin (or African features) are inferior. There are several other examples illustrating this from the black males' interview:

Khwezi: …I don't really mind what my kid looks like, but my wife must be a yellow bone.

Siya: When you think yellow bone, you think clean, you think delicate and soft, maybe a bit more feminine you know?

Tumi: So the weave is…an enhancing feature that's just…more European, apparently more attractive. It does look more attractive in my personal opinion, but that's just because I've been conditioned that way…my mom had weaves…is she less prettier now with dreadlocks? She's my mom so I'm gonna say no. But if it was any other girl, I'd probably say…wrong move.

When it came to hair in particular black and coloured participants agreed that smooth straight hair was generally considered better, although several females said they loved and preferred naturally curly hair. Several female participants were particularly vocal about being judged harshly on the basis of choosing to wear a weave or braids:

Ayanda: I think the whole hair thing, firstly, I don't understand why hair is a political statement in the first place. I wear a weave because I can't walk around with my hair in Cape Town, it breaks [laughter] If you had my hair, you would understand. But I find a lot of men…love bringing it up. You have a weave, oh you're not African enough.

Just try to maintain black hair. It's a mission and it's never about…I'm trying to be white… Literally because it looks nice on me, so I am gonna do it or it's more convenient for me to have braids because it rains in Cape Town.

Ruby: Yeah, I agree. Um, it's become a thing to have your natural hair out and unprocessed and stuff like that. And if you're wearing a weave or a relaxer you're trying to be white. I mean… easier to curl my hair when it's relaxed than when it's not…and it's as simple as that. And I want to wear a weave and it looks nice. A weave looks nice, relaxed hair looks nice, whether you want to say it's subconsciously white or whatever it is. It's just, ag, the hair thing, whatever, just… [laughter]

Thembi: Um, I think another thing is there's not a lot of information about how to maintain natural black hair. So if, all I know the convenient, the most convenient thing is to go braid my hair or to relax it…that's what I would do. If…you want to figure out how to take care of natural black, you have to go watch a thousand tutorials and by seven kgs of coconut oil [laughter]

In one sense, these responses can be interpreted as a conscious or unconscious compliance with the idea that hair which approximates whiteness is more beautiful. Indeed several participants did state that they felt straight hair and weaves are more attractive. Another consideration however, is the observation made by Thembi about the world generally being constructed on whiteness as a standard of beauty. Using this as part of the analysis, it can be assumed that products which give access to European hair are more widely available,

presenting a "convenience factor" in the maintenance of hair for women. In the process, this abundance of hair modifiers (coupled with the messages of white beauty which accompany them) and lack of natural hair maintainers, may inadvertently function as another form of victimisation for women. Presented with the "choice" women resort to easier ways of maintaining their hair. By the participants' accounts, this exposes them to shame-inducing scrutiny from others as self-hating or white-aspiring individuals, which can also have psychologically harmful effects. Another consideration is that both the processes of "compliance" and victimisation may occur in tandem. Regardless of how hair modification is interpreted, underlying the experience are negative feelings of discomfort, guilt and shame. Thus an underlying traumatic (and gendered) effect can also be identified through this experience.

The traumatic effects of experiences of racism and colourism, though not always immediately recognisable, have been highlighted in this section. From the historical remnants of slavery and apartheid etched into collective understandings of being black, to the everyday encounters that re-enact psychologically painful experiences, trauma permeated many participants' stories of colourism in their world. It is possible to understand through this, how internalised racism continues to fragment individuals' ordinary sense of themselves (as described Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela, 2007) as black and coloured people in post-apartheid South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

Findings and relation to literature

Findings from the interviews show that the residual effects of (white supremacy motivated) colonialism, slavery, apartheid were still being experienced through a process of cultural trauma, among students who are part of a generation raised in democratic South Africa. Participants expressed their frustration with a cycle of overt and tacit racism which continues in their everyday interactions with friends, family, their university, media platforms, their country and in what they witness from other parts of the world. This is important to highlight because the persistence of white racism structures, also means that colourism structures remain intact (Hunter, 2007). Reports of colourism as commonplace in the various contexts listed above reflects literature findings which suggest that "people of colour are often complicit in the very colourism that disadvantages them, reproducing it in their treatment of other people of colour, including…their own families" (Phoenix, 2014, p.103). This is also indicative of a process of symbolic violence through which colourism is exercised.

Beyond the difficulties presented by colourism, are the challenges met in confronting it. Many participants who chose not to speak on issues of colourism in their personal contexts, said that they did not want to create or perpetuate divisions within their racial group, or among their family and friends. This is consistent with Hochschild & Weaver (2007) and Glenn's (2008) analysis that colourism divides people of colour. Additionally, the material and social benefits derived from colourism make it difficult to challenge, even for those who are disadvantaged by it and this is often compounded by media messaging (Phoenix, 2014). A notable example is how the cosmetic choice (primarily for women) to obtain European features such as silky hair and lighter skin appear rational, given their likelihood to result in better opportunities in competitive markets such as beauty and marriage. Such difficulties in challenging colourism were evident from interview findings in two areas: evading talk about colourism in order to avoid conflict, and resistance in personally engaging in conversations which challenge beauty choices-particularly the widely accepted choice to modifying hair. This lack of engagement in problematizing standards set by colourism may effectively mean that individuals assent to the proposition that they should modify their behaviour and appearance, instead of exposing the hierarchies it creates as arbitrary social constructions.

In terms of racial identity perceptions, the majority of black students felt that there were negative associations with being black, particularly with darker skin in their own racial group. Coloured female students felt more ambivalent about their racial identity, often choosing to identify as individuals rather than aligning with racial categorisation. It should be emphasized that several students took great pride in their identity, racial or otherwise, with many stating that they were learning to find beauty within themselves and the skin that they are in. Nevertheless, black and coloured participants reported that whiteness was still a highly valued attribute among many. This continues to perpetuate a hierarchy of skin tone (as it overlaps with race) within their racial groups. The implications of internalising ideas driven by white supremacy and the effects this has on the psychological wellbeing of black and coloured students is still largely unknown. However, it is clear from their accounts that this affects individuals in a way that produce stressful trauma-like symptoms.

Trauma in the various forms discussed, appeared to be a significant aspect of the experience of colourism as an internalised form of racism. The connection between colourism and trauma was highlighted in interview discussions showing impacts of colourism in relation to classical symptoms of PTSD. This method of analysis was similar to that of Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) and Loo, Fairbank, Scurfield, Ruch, King, Adams & Chemtob (2001) in their research of the traumatic effects of racism. Although this comparison draws attention to the psychologically painful effects of colourism as potentially traumatic, it also shows the limitations of current trauma diagnoses in capturing the effects of colourism on its targets. By way of traditional diagnosis, colourism and racism are not considered "traumatic events" since they are not regarded as explicitly life-threatening. However, the fact that they can induce psychologically painful symptoms resembling those of PTSD, means that traditional knowledge of trauma among underrepresented groups is necessarily restricted (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005).

Though it may be clear that colourism can have adverse effects on individual's ordinary sense of themselves, what is less clear, are what specific aspects are responsible for this. This is because the effects vary greatly in individuals, as does the significance of racial issues in their lives. Nevertheless the fact that these results, in a relatively small sample of students, are similar to larger findings from the US (Hunter, 2007; 2011), UK (Gabriel, 2007), and several parts of Asia and Africa (Glenn, 2008) suggests that issues of colourism may be applicable in the context of South Africa, and may certainly warrant deeper enquiry.

Limitations

The main limitation of this research is lack of coloured male participants. This meant that the views which this group could offer was not directly represented in this research. Thus the depth of colourism experience from coloured participants could only be captured from a female perspective. Other limitations relate to thematic analysis as a method. The flexibility of thematic analysis means that the range of information which can be drawn from the data is broad, which made it difficult for the researcher in deciding what aspects of the data to focus on (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, when compared to methods like discourse analysis, thematic analysis does not allow researcher to make claims about the use of language (Braun & Clarke, 2006) as it relates to colourism experiences.

The lack of available research on colourism in the South African context meant that this research had to be framed as an explorative study. This also meant the researcher could not necessarily anticipate the nature of the data the subject matter would present. Though this warranted the use of a tailored theoretical framework, it also presented the possibility that the analysis, together with this framework, had limited interpretative power.

Lastly, because the interviewer is a light skinned black woman, this may have impacted on the quality of the data that was received, insofar as the participant's willingness and ability to be transparent. This was discussed in greater depth in the section detailing considerations of power and reflexivity. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the limitations this could present, particularly in this research where skin tone and gender play a key role in the articulation of colourism.

Recommendations

What has emerged from this research, is the importance of problematizing the complexities of internalised racism and the psychological effects that this may have on people of colour. In addition, acknowledging that covert incidents of racism (some of which function through colourism), may produce traumatic responses in those who perceive them (Bryant-Davis & Ocampo, 2005) is an important step in cultivating a more wholesome understanding of racially marginalised groups.

Colourism research in particular, is necessary to explore the ways in which messages of racism have been internalised are re-enacted by people of colour amongst each other, even within their own families. It is recommended that future research on racism begins to focus

on colourism as a specific type of racism articulation in South Africa. This may provide a new and perhaps necessary view on the psychological remnants of apartheid which has been culturally transmitted to a generation that did not live through that era. It may also potentially enrich the understanding of other phenomena in South Africa with elements of skin tone discrimination such as xenophobic discrimination. Overall South Africa's racially charged and violent history makes it an ideal environment for colourism to thrive, hence it necessitates research in this area.

Although this particular research was conducted on a relatively small sample, the fact that findings reflect significant aspect of global colourism literature, means that the known implications of colourism should perhaps be taken into account in therapeutic settings in South Africa. It is therefore recommended that research and practice casts a critical eye on the unconscious reproduction of white supremacist systems (such as white privilege and colourism) and how this impacts client-therapist relationships. This can address several barriers which (people of colour) encounter in the mental health system including "clinicians' lack of awareness of cultural issues, bias, or inability to speak the clients' language and the client's fear and mistrust of treatment" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS] in Carter, 2007, p.14).

This research also echoed findings from Bryant Davis and Ocampo (2005), Carter (2007), Levin et al (2014) and Sanchez-Hucles (1998) that traditional conceptions of PTSD and trauma knowledge in general, needs to be expanded to encompass the trauma of racism (and by extension, its inseparable link to colourism). The acknowledgement of racism in its various forms (including colourism) as potentially traumatic may promote treatments which lessen personal and group distress, while fostering the recognition that a radical alteration of institutions is necessary before any true healing of people of colour can be realized and sustained (Sanchez-Hucles, 1998).

It is therefore recommended that psychological research efforts begin to focus on contributing toward a conceptualisation of trauma that is based on the experiences of racially marginalised groups, as they internalise and cope with racism and colourism. Sanchez-Hucles (1998) advises that this approach may provide greater insight than the alternative of making these experiences of trauma fit existing models (as done in this research). This holds important implications for many in the field of psychology. As Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) put it, the responsibility to expand psychology with respect to research, teaching, and practice lies

not only with counsellors of colour but with all involved in the field. This is particularly important in South Africa where psychology remains a white-dominated profession.

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APPENDIX A: Call for participants advertisement

Research Invitation: Colourism among coloured and black students

Dear Students

You are invited to participate in a research study at UCT.

This research aims to investigate colourism as a phenomenon among black and coloured students. Specifically, what beliefs and perceptions students hold about skin colour (light and dark skin) and racial identity within their respective racial groups. The study will also explore what behaviours and emotions accompany these beliefs and perceptions.

The research will require participants to take part in a focus group discussion that will last approximately 90 minutes.

All participants will be rewarded with 3 SRPP points.

Participation criteria:

1. Registered in the Humanities faculty for an undergraduate Psychology course.

2. Over the age of 18

3. Belonging to either South African Black or Coloured racial group.

If you meet the criteria above and would like to participate, please email the researcher on smbatha.research@gmail.com to sign up. Please specify if you are participating in semester 1 or 2. You may also direct queries related to the research to this email address.

Kind regards

Slindile Mbatha

Disclaimer

It is generally accepted that the decision to include or exclude individuals from participating in a study depends on the focus, objective, nature of research and context in which the research is conducted. Some research may be focused on a certain individual (such as in a person's life history), or a group of individuals who share a specific characteristic (e.g., an identifiable group of asthma sufferers who happen to be all of one sex; a religious order that is restricted to one sex). Other examples include research that is focused on specific cultural traditions or languages, or on one age group (e.g., a study of posture corrections in adolescents). These are regarded as appropriate forms of inclusion and exclusion of individuals or groups in research studies - so long as the selection criteria for those to be included in the research are relevant to answering the research question.

Appendix B: Call for participants advertisement (posted at Obz Square)

LIGHT SKIN VS DARK SKIN: YOU CAN BE PART OF THE DEBATE

This research aims to investigate colourism as a phenomenon among black and coloured students. Specifically, what beliefs and perceptions students hold about skin colour (light and dark skin) and racial identity within their respective racial groups. The study will also explore what behaviours and emotions accompany these beliefs and perceptions.

The research will require participants to take part in a focus group discussion that will last approximately 90 minutes.

Participation criteria:

1.   Registered UCT Student

2.   Over the age of 18

3.   Belonging to either South African Black or Coloured racial group**.**

If you meet the criteria above and would like to participate, please email the researcher on smbatha.research@gmail.com to sign up. You may also direct queries related to the research to this email address.

Disclaimer

It is generally accepted that the decision to include or exclude individuals from participating in a study depends on the focus, objective, nature of research and context in which the research is conducted. Some research may be focused on a certain individual (such as in a person's life history), or a group of individuals who share a specific characteristic (e.g., an identifiable group of asthma sufferers who happen to be all of one sex; a religious order that is restricted to one sex). Other examples include research that is focused on specific cultural traditions or languages, or on one age group (e.g., a study of posture corrections in adolescents). These are regarded as appropriate forms of inclusion and exclusion of individuals or groups in research studies - so long as the selection criteria for those to be included in the research are relevant to answering the research question.

APPENDIX C: Interview schedule

Identical questions will be asked across all focus groups. The questions will be adapted (where necessary) according to the racial and gender composition of the focus group.

Racial identity

1. What does it mean to you to be black/coloured?
2. Do you consider your skin colour to be part of your identity? (How so? Or if not, why not?)

Discrimination and skin capital

3. Do you think that different shades of skin are valued differently within your racial group? (If yes, in what way?)
4. Do you think light skinned (black or coloured) people, are treated differently from dark skinned (black or coloured) people?
5. If so, in what ways?
6. Have you personally experienced discrimination from other people within your racial group because of the shade of your skin?

Gendered identity and experience

7. Do you think that gender plays a role in how skin tone is regarded within your racial group? (If yes, how so? If no, why not?)
8. In what ways do you think men and women respond to how their skin colour is viewed within their racial group? (This may also be related to personal experience)

Socio economic-status

9. Do you think that level of education affects how light and dark skin people are perceived within your racial group?
10. Would you say that social status influences how people view shades of skin? (To clarify, do you think that having high or low social status would change how people look at the shade of your skin?)

11. Have you thought about these issues before?

APPENDIX D: Information sheet and consent form

University of Cape Town

Consent to participate in a research study:

Understanding skin colour as social capital: an exploration of colourism among black and coloured students

Dear Participant,

Study Purpose

You are being asked to participate in a study being conducted by myself; a clinical psychology masters student from the University of Cape Town. The purpose of this study is to explore colourism as a phenomenon among black and coloured students. Namely the perceptions about the value of skin colour, and the beliefs, behaviours associated with these.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are part of the population which is the subject of this research enquiry.

Study Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group discussion which should take approximately 60 minutes. The discussion will address questions relating to racial identity and colourism. All information obtained will be kept strictly confidential.

Possible risks

There are no known risks to you for participating in this study. Should you however experience any sense of emotional and/or emotional discomfort from participating in the study please notify me immediately.

Possible benefits

It is my hope that the information gained from this study will help increase awareness around colourism and its manifestations. I also hope that the information will contribute towards shaping a conceptual understanding about the nature of colourism in the South African context.

Alternatives

You may choose not to participate in this study, and this decision will not affect your relationship with the university in any way.

Voluntary participation

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to refuse to answer any question. If you decide to participate, you are free to change your mind and discontinue participation at any time.

Confidentiality

The researcher will make every attempt to ensure that confidentiality of the participants and information is maintained. Your name and other identifying information will not be used in publications of the study. The consent form and documentation from the discussion will be kept separately in locked cabinet and information obtained from the focus group discussion will not be made available to anyone besides the researcher and her supervisor.

However, the confidentiality of the information discussed will also be contingent on other participants (including yourself) maintaining confidentiality. Therefore total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed by the researcher.

Questions

Any study-related questions, problems or emergencies should be directed to the following researchers:

Slindile Mbatha (researcher)   076 141 2048

Dr. Buhle Zuma (supervisor)   021 650 4997

If you have any concerns about the way the study was conducted, or your rights as a participant, please feel free to contact the Department of Psychology at the University of Cape Town on 021 650 3435

I have read the above and am satisfied with my understanding of the study, its possible benefits risks and alternatives. My questions about the study have been answered. I hereby voluntarily consent to participation in the research study as described.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

_____   _____

Name of participant   Witness

The discussions will be recorded to assist the researcher in accurately documenting the information. Information from the discussion will be recorded anonymously, and once the discussion has been documented, the recording will be destroyed.

I agree that the discussion may be recorded.

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

_____   _____

Name of participant   Witness